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OPINION METER

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10
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Christmas

INSIDE



Holiday Spending

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in 2012 in a mix of the practical and
the indulgent.

FOCUS...Page 17



Best Yet

Luckily for Tom Cruise, his latest
"Mission: Impossible" is one of his
finest flicks yet.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 20

Labor reviewing employer compliance with USCIS rules. PAGE 6
Little fire ant found in more sites in Guam. PAGE 8

23 pending bills impact Fund

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

At least 10 of 23 pending bills and initiatives under review by the Senate Special Committee on the NMI Retirement Fund will either add or reduce costs for the Fund ranging from \$60,000 to over \$100 million. Others pieces of legislation have yet to be fully reviewed.

» **Bills either adds or cuts cost by \$60K to over \$1M**
» **House member seeks joint committee**

Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota), chair of the special committee, said yesterday that one of two subcommittees formed is tasked with reviewing legislation impacting the Fund and it has so far come up with 23 measures.

These pieces of legislation include House Speaker Eli Cabrera's (R-Saipan) bill allowing Fund members to withdraw their contributions from the pension agency without severance of employment

See BILLS on Page 4

Mariana House undergoing \$70K renovation

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The CNMI government's building in Washington, D.C. called the Mariana House—once complained by a neighbor for being rat-infested—is finally undergoing much needed renovations worth \$50,000 to \$70,000 to turn it into an income-generating property after sitting idle since January 2009.

Mariana House, located at 2121 R Street NW Washington, D.C., used to be occupied by the office of the CNMI resident representative to Washington, D.C. The federalization law abolished this office and gave way to the CNMI's first nonvoting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives.

See MARIANA on Page 4



YULETIDE CAROLERS

Ten senior citizens spread the holiday joy by singing Christmas carols to the lawmakers and their staff at the House Chamber on Capital Hill yesterday. The group was accompanied by Aging Center program coordinator Walter Manglona and staffer Alex Laniyo.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

See story on Page 6

Ex-business partner of late tycoon wants to take over COP

» **Raises investment offer to \$11M**
» **Vows to have 2 weekly charter flights from China**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A group led by a former business partner of the late business tycoon Larry Hillblom has reiterated its intent to invest over \$11 million in the Coral Ocean Point Hotel and

Golf Course on Saipan.

Pacific Investment and Development Corp. previously offered to invest over \$10 million in the hotel but is now promising an additional \$1 million to rehabilitate the hotel.

PIDC president Cheong Pui Ng submitted

See EX-BUSINESS on Page 4



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Local



CLARISSA V. DAVID
Entomology professor Ross Miller of the University of Guam, fourth right, state ant specialist Dr. Cas Vanderwoude of the University of Hawaii, right, pest survey specialist Yolisa Ishibashi of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, second right, and Marianne Teregeyo of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, fifth right, are joined by Quarantine staff for a group photo before the start of the second session of the Invasive Species Workshop held at the Commonwealth Ports Authority Aircraft Rescue Firefighting Facility conference room yesterday.

RELATED NEWS

■ Little fire ant found in more sites in Guam.

PAGE 8

NMI warned to be on the lookout for little fire ants

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
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REPORTER

The community is urged to be on the lookout for little fire ants and to report any possible sightings to prevent these invasive pests from wreaking devastation in the CNMI.

Little fire ants are tiny, non-descript ants that can be found on the underside of leaves, in the ground or in treetops eating other insects, snails, geckos, baby chicks, and whatever they find in their paths.

"If [people] think that they have this ant or something similar, bring it in and we'll take a look at it and we'll let them know what they have," entomology professor Ross Miller of the University of Guam College of Natural and Applied Sciences said yesterday.

Despite their size, little fire ants are "probably the worst insect pest that could possibly come to the islands," Miller said, as their colonies can kill all small animals and insects and "basically make life miserable for anybody who lives around it."

Little fire ants have already infested the neighboring island of Guam and are widespread at about seven different sites from north to south of the island.

"It looks like the infestations are pretty well established and it looks like it's been around 10 years maybe," Miller told *Saipan Tribune*.

While they have yet to do DNA testing to determine where Guam's little fire ants came from, Miller believes the pest came from Hawaii, which got it from Florida, which came from the

Caribbean. He said it might have been transported through plant materials that were brought in.

A surveillance project funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has allowed the search for little fire ants in various areas in the CNMI such as commercial and private farms, plant nurseries, the Puerto Rico Dump, Marpi landfill, and even the transfer station.

Fortunately, no sightings of the little fire ants have been detected so far, said Miller.

"It's very good news. But because it's now [in] Guam, for sure there's always the potential that it's going to come. What we really need help from is for the local population to be aware," emphasized Miller.

Miller is on island, along with Dr. Cas Vanderwoude, state ant specialist from the University of Hawaii Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit, and pest survey specialist Yolisa Ishibashi of the USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine, to conduct the Invasive Species Workshop.

The workshop is a collaborative effort among partner government agencies, which allowed for the training of some eight staffers of the Department of Land and Natural Resources Quarantine Division at the Commonwealth Ports Authority conference room yesterday.

Marianne Teregeyo, special assistant to the DLNR secretary, said the workshop will teach Quarantine staffers how to set up traps to detect and prevent potential damage caused by these pests.

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Bill seeks donation of \$10 to \$50 from tax rebate/refund for causes

Papua New Guinea in crisis over rival leaders

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (AP)—Papua New Guinea's government was in crisis Wednesday, with veteran leader Sir Michael Somare claiming to have been reinstated as prime minister and ousted Prime Minister Peter O'Neill refusing to give up power despite a court order.

The power struggle is unprecedented for the former Australian territory, which is rich in mineral resources including oil, gold and copper and crops such as coffee and cocoa.

The country's Supreme Court and governor-general have backed 76-year-old Somare, who the high court ruled was illegally removed as prime minister while getting medical treatment outside the country. But O'Neill's lawmakers continued to pass legislation recognizing him as leader.

The battle between the two rivals escalated on Tuesday, when lawmakers backing O'Neill stormed the governor-general's gates a day after the Supreme Court ruled O'Neill's election by parliament in August unconstitutional and said Somare should be reinstated as prime minister.

Somare said Wednesday that his Cabinet had been sworn in by Governor-General Sir Michael Ogio, who represents British Queen Elizabeth II—the South Pacific nation's head of state. Somare insisted he did not need to be sworn in himself, because the Supreme Court had already reinstated him as prime minister.

"It is regretful that all of

government was put on hold, but this situation has been diffused by the swearing-in today of my Cabinet," Somare said in a statement.

The crisis, however, ap-



Somare



O'Neill

peared far from over Wednesday, with lawmakers loyal to O'Neill passing a motion ordering Ogio to swear in O'Neill as prime minister. O'Neill could not be reached for immediate comment.

On Tuesday, O'Neill said he met with Ogio briefly after about 60 of his loyal lawmakers stormed through a police cordon around Ogio's official residence in the capital, Port Moresby.

"We are unarmed, and we're

the legitimate government," Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio quoted the lawmakers as telling police.

The Supreme Court's 3-2 decision Monday ruling O'Neill's election unconstitutional came after O'Neill's government passed a series of retroactive laws legalizing its decision to dump Somare from office while he was in Singapore recovering from a heart condition.

One of Somare's first acts when the Supreme Court ordered his return to power was to reinstate former Police Commissioner Fred Yakasa and oust

O'Neill's appointee, Tom Kulunga. Both police chiefs were present at the governor-general's home and held discussions with lawmakers loyal to O'Neill.

Somare has based himself at the popular Ela Beach Hotel, where he has set up a Cabinet made up mostly of ministers from his previous government.

Somare had been in Singapore for five months between late March and Sept. 6, when he returned to parliament after undergoing three heart operations.

Australian Foreign Minister Kevin said the former Australian colony had entered uncharted waters through the two leaders making claims for the prime ministership.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan) has introduced a bill seeking to allow taxpayers to donate \$10 to \$50 of their tax rebate or refund to help fund Saipan Southern High School's Manta Ray Band's performance at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, maintenance of public and veterans cemeteries, and Karidat Social Services.

Palacios said yesterday that his House Bill 17-243 could be acted on during a session tentatively set for Monday.

"This is not a controversial bill and I hope my colleagues would support it. This is voluntary donation, it does not obligate anyone," he added.

The bill only covers rebates

and refunds for tax years 2011 and 2012.

Under the bill, the 2011 territorial individual income tax form will have a section that will allow people to donate \$10, \$20, or \$50 to any of the three worthy causes.

For tax year 2011, the donations will go either toward Manta Ray Band or for the maintenance of public and veterans cemeteries.

Palacios said any donation to the Manta Ray Band will have to be provided no later than July 1, 2012. Manta Ray Band has been asking for support so they could finance their trip and perform at the London Olympic Games in 2012.

For tax year 2012, the donations will go to either Karidat or the cemeteries' maintenance.

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Excerpts of Alegre's deposition read in court

Excerpts of the deposition of the former restaurant manager of Saipan Grand Hotel who is accused of making sexual advances on a band singer were read in federal court yesterday.

U.S. District Court for the NMI law clerk QuynhChi Nguyen read Tomas Alegre's answers in the deposition, while the lawyers for the parties read the questions.

After the reading of Alegre's depositions, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission trial attorneys Derek Li and Nancy Griffiths called to the stand more witnesses: Grand Hotel personnel manager Joseph Ada and general manager Ed Cho.

When *Saipan Tribune* left the courtroom in the afternoon, attorney Steven Pixley, counsel for Saipan Grand Ho-

tel's owners, Asia Pacific Hotels Inc., and Tan Holdings Corp., was still cross examining EEOC's expert witness.

In his deposition, Alegre said the singer invited him to come to her hotel room shortly after a small birthday party for her held near the hotel's beach in the early morning of Jan. 2, 2008. Alegre said the singer invited him to sleep on her bed. He admitted

hugging and kissing her. When asked if the singer pushed him and asked him to leave, Alegre replied "no." Alegre also said that they hugged and kissed at the beach.

Alegre said that Joseph Ada later conducted an investigation and told him he was suspended and that they were going to terminate his contract.

Ada and Cho talked about their role in the investigation as well as the hotel's policies regarding sexual harassment.

The EEOC's expert testified that her general opinion was that there was deficiency on the company's part regarding its sexual harassment policies. The expert explained the four steps in order to have efficient sexual harassment policies.

When asked if she interviewed any human resources personnel on Saipan before coming up with her opinion, the expert replied, "No."

The trial will continue today, Thursday. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

EX-BUSINESS

From Page 1

Monday to Public Lands Secretary Oscar M. Babauta his proposal for a 25-year lease with an option to lease up to 40 years for the management and operation of Coral Ocean Point.

Copies of the proposal were also sent to the offices of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, Senate President Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota), and

Speaker Eli D. Cabrera (R-Saipan).

Ng is president of Bang Plee Construction Limited that built Hillblom's Dalat Hotel and Golf Course in Vietnam in 1994. He owns Royal Crown Insurance and several other businesses on the island.

Ng previously submitted a proposal to take over Coral Ocean Point but this got pushed aside after the Legislature approved in August Suwaso Corp.'s proposed 15-year extension on its 25-year public land lease.

In his letter on Monday, Ng said they have heard that the extension given by Public Lands to Coral Ocean Point's current lessee has lapsed without complying with the terms and conditions of the extension.

"With this circumstance, our party would like to inform you that we are still interested in leasing the property," Ng said.

It was recently reported that Suwaso Corp.'s board secretary Philip Mendiola-Long had resigned. Coral Ocean

Point's longtime comptroller also reportedly recently resigned.

When asked about Long's and the comptroller's reported resignation, Suwaso Corp. chair Vincent Torres said he will soon issue a statement. He earlier insisted that everything in Suwaso is going as planned.

Ng claimed that they have the resources, experience, and funding to take over, maintain, operate, and manage Coral Ocean Point. He promised to immediately invest \$10 million in the hotel as soon as their offer is accepted.

He said they will begin within six months the renovations, repairs, and improvements to Coral Ocean Point.

PIDC, Ng said, will build a new hotel complex consisting of 100 units at a cost of \$6 million in six months after all the building plans and permit requirements are approved.

In addition, he said, they will build pavilions, toilet facilities, and other tourist amenities at the beach side area at a cost of \$300,000 for the use and benefit of local residents.

"We intend to employ 200 local residents and U.S. citizens when the renovations and construction projects are completed and fully operational," he said.

Ng said they will also bring in two weekly charter flights with 400 tourist passengers every week—about 1,600

per month or about 19,200 passengers a year—that will patronize Coral Ocean Point. The flights, he said, will come from Hunan Province in China and will be operated by Hainan Airlines and Xiamen Airlines.

With the charter flights, Ng said that they also plan to market and export fish and agricultural products from the CNMI to China to help island fishermen and farmers and induce business activities.

Ng added that their engineer had already inspected the hotel and determined that immediate repairs should be done to the hotel rooms since termites are all over the premises.

The approval of Suwaso's extended lease was supposed to pave the way for a \$22-million upgrade to Coral Ocean Point's hotel and golf course and the construction of 200 new guest rooms.

The new Suwaso owners then promised to settle the previous owners' debts to the CNMI government of almost \$1 million, and with other CNMI private and public agencies using an immediate infusion of \$7 million.

Coral Ocean Point is located on a 735,023 square meter property in Unai Dangkulu.

Under the law, any lease and extension of lease of public land consisting of more than five hectares requires legislative approval.

BILLS

From Page 1

or penalties. House Bill 17-226 passed the House and is now with the Senate.

The Fund previously said this will cost the agency over \$100 million, but Taimanao said the special panel is waiting for an updated figure from subcommittee chair and Fund administrator Richard Villagomez.

Of the 23 measures, three are Senate initiatives, six are Senate bills, and 14 are House bills.

As of yesterday, the Fund is opposed to six of these measures, in support of 13, neutral on one bill, no position on another one, and has yet to take a position on two others.

Rep. Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan) said yesterday he is greatly concerned about the Fund's poor condition and the effect it has on its active and retired members.

Demapan, chair of the House Committee on Judiciary and Governmental Operations, wrote a letter to Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) yesterday, citing Senate President Paul Manglona's (Ind-Rota) formation of a Fund review committee. That letter also invited House members to participate in the committee.

As of yesterday, the speaker has yet to heed the Senate president's request for House members to form a committee on Fund issues.

Demapan, in his letter to the speaker, recognized that addressing the Fund's concerns will be difficult and that finding a solution that will be fair and equitable to everyone will be even more challenging.

"However, I agree with your position that the Legislature...needs to put aside politics and work together," said Demapan.

Initiatives

The Fund is opposed to Senate Legislative Initiative 17-3, which it estimates to negatively cost the Fund \$2.5 million.

This initiative, introduced by Senate floor leader Pete Reyes (R-Saipan), proposes to amend the Constitution to explicitly state that qualified retirees may be employed as classroom teachers, doctors, nurses and other medical professionals without loss of retirement benefits, regardless of the individual's occupation prior to retirement. It also

clarifies the term "medical professionals" to include dentists, dental lab technicians, dental assistants, therapists, veterinarians, and animal health officer.

The Fund said that SLI 17-3 consumes CNMI resources that can be used to help the Fund via reduction in payouts or increase in contributions.

The Fund supports Senate President Paul Manglona's (Ind-Rota) SLI 17-13 and SLI 17-14.

The first one transfers certain public lands to the Fund, while the second one transfers certain funds from the Marianas Public Land Trust to the Fund. "The Fund supports measure that potentially provides additional funding to support payouts to retirees," the pension agency said.

Based on the Senate special committee's documents, the Fund estimates that SLI 17-14 will result in \$2 million additional money for the Fund.

Senate bills

The Fund supports Senate Bill 17-35, which transfers the function of paying the special annuity benefits for governors and lieutenant governors from the Fund to the Department of Finance; SB 17-36 SD1, which defines "child" to include adopted children after retirement benefits; and SB 17-94 SD1, which suspends the Fund's procurement restrictions for 90 days.

The Fund said that SB 17-36 SD1, for example, will result in \$100,000 savings by curtailing abuses found among retirees who adopt their grandchildren to circumvent the Fund's enabling Act.

The pension agency also said SB 17-94 SD1 will result in \$7 million savings.

Two Senate bills, however, are not favorable to the Fund: SB 17-27 SD1 and SB 17-29 SD1.

SB 17-27 SD1, which temporarily suspends early retirement penalty and referendum protections, is expected to cost the Fund an additional \$3.6 million.

SB 17-29, meanwhile, allows repayment of early retirement penalty to be deducted from pension over time using an actuarially determined repayment rate. There is no cost estimate for this bill yet.

House bills

The Fund supports eight House bills and opposes three.

It opposes HB 17-11, which restores payment flexibility to Class I members.

It also opposes HB 17-40 HD1 SS1 SD2, which it says will bring an added cost to the Fund of \$1.44 million. This bill proposes that only 60 percent of the Judiciary collections be placed in a Judicial Building Fund, among other things.

The Fund is also opposed to HB 17-204, removing entirely the June 2012 date for early retirement, among other things.

The Fund supports HB 17-13, transferring the administrative function of the Group Health and Life Insurance from the Fund to Finance, saying it will reduce Fund expenses by \$7 million.

The agency also supports HB 17-14, transferring the administrative function of the Workers Compensation Commission from the Fund to Commerce, and will result in \$60,000 savings for the Fund.

HB 17-74 also got the Fund's support. This bill allows the Fund to assess interest on over or under payment of benefits.

The Fund also supports HB 17-77 HD1 SD2, amending the life insurance statute in order to negotiate a better life insurance policy for active government employees and current retirees.

It also said HB 17-98 HD1 will result in \$270,284 savings to the Fund, by stopping the accrual of retirement or disability benefits beyond \$40,000 for any member.

The Fund also supports HB 17-99, which provides for an actuarially determined amount necessary for the Fund to be annually appropriated; HB 17-100, which reorganizes the board of trustees; and HB 17-220, which repeals the beneficiary derivative lawsuit act.

The Fund, however, has no position on HB 17-97, which includes membership from a chartered or incorporated organization representing CNMI retirees.

The Fund also said it is neutral on Cabrera's HB 17-226, the contribution withdrawal bill.

"However, there must be a funding mechanism for the Fund to pay pension and meet all CNMI government obligations," it said.

It's not known yet what the Fund's position is on SB 17-94 and HB 17-217.

Experts earlier said that the Fund could only have a three-year lifespan considering its assets, liabilities, unfunded liabilities, and lack of government employer contribution payments, among other things.

MARIANA

From Page 1

Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos confirmed in an interview that a maintenance company is now handling the renovation, including permitting from regulatory agencies. He said the renovation is expected to be done by January.

"We needed to do the renovation in order for the property to be out in the market in rentable condition," Inos told *Saipan Tribune*.

Inos, who oversees government finances, said the Fitial administration plans to have the property leased out "for maybe a couple of years until the market improves."

"But we need to [restore] the property back into rentable condition, including compliance with building code, etc. Renovation will cost between \$50,000 and \$70,000," he said, adding that this is one investment that the administration has not forgotten about.

Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan) separately said yesterday that the renovation is a "sound decision" and well within the administration's authority.

"The property market is too soft right now so if we have to sell it, we have to do so when the market improves," said Yumul, former chair of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The fiscal year 2012 budget law, Public Law 17-55, provided additional funding for the operations of the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, "which will primarily be used to restore the

Marianas House in Washington, D.C."

In 2011, funds were spent from the operations account of the Office of the Lt. Governor to make repairs and pay pending bills of the Marianas House, the budget law says.

Inos said the administration hopes to have the property rented at "the going rate."

"At this point we don't have any figure as yet. We have to put it out in the market...But as you know, the market has been depressed for a while," he added.

Yumul said the last time he heard, the property could be rented out for \$5,000 to \$8,000 if it's for residential purpose.

"But if it's going to be rented out for office, for example, lawyers or lobbyists who want to stay close as possible to Capitol, then the rental would be higher," he added.

Early this year, a neighbor of the Mariana House complained to the CNMI government about rat infestation at the vacant building, and the government said it was able to address such concern.

As early as February 2009, Public Auditor Mike Pai had said that due to the unfavorable real estate market, the CNMI government is going to keep the house and it could be rented out at \$10,000 to \$15,000 a month.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan (Ind-MP), the CNMI's first and so far only nonvoting delegate to Congress, has not occupied the Mariana House but is renting a studio-type apartment in Columbia Heights, a train away from work.

IN BEATING OF 70-YEAR-OLD MAN

Victim's two sons are also arrested

Police arrested on Tuesday afternoon the two sons of the 70-year-old man who was allegedly assaulted by three men along a road in Dandan.

Police said that brothers Ernie Matagolai Dejillas, 24, and Yonnie Matagolai Dejillas, 28, were arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon and disturbing the peace.

Detective Raymond B. Borja said police investigation showed that during the same incident, Ernie Dejillas chased 23-year-old Jerome Norita with a machete, while Yonnie Dejillas tried to run over Jerome Norita's 48-year-old father, Juan Norita.

At yesterday's hearing, Superior Court associate judge

Joseph James N. Camacho imposed a \$500 cash bail each for the Dejillas brothers. Preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 22 at 9am.

Juan and Jerome Norita were arrested shortly after the incident, but both were subsequently released upon posting \$16,250 each in unsecured bond.

Juan and Jerome Norita and another unidentified man allegedly beat up the 70-year-old Pantaleon P. Dejillas and his son, Ernie Dejillas, along Flame Tree Road in Dandan on Dec. 2, 2011 at 7:19am. The older Dejillas sustained a fractured left jaw.

The OAG said that Pantaleon De Jillas had just been involved in an accident and had stopped

to help a girl that he had hit with his pickup truck.

Juan and Jerome Norita allegedly

came and began punching and kicking the old man.

As Ernie Dejillas ap-

proached to help his father, the defendants allegedly began hurling pieces of cinder block

at him. One piece of the cinder block hit Ernie Dejillas in the ear, cutting him.

Subsequent police investigation, however, showed that brothers Dejillas also attacked Juan and Jerome Norita. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

DPS steps up campaign against drug abuse among youth

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety is working on ways to address the drug problem in the Commonwealth, which is already claiming victims among the youth, according to Commissioner Ray Mafnas.

Mafnas on Tuesday described abuse of drugs such as crystal methamphetamine hydrochloride or "ice" and other controlled substances as "a very serious issue" and a "community

problem" in the CNMI.

"What it does is it hurts children and innocent people and destroys the very core of our American family," said Mafnas.

According to him, drug abuse leads to other issues such as domestic violence cases.

He expressed particular alarm and concern that the problem has now reached schools.

He said there are new instructors and officers being trained for the Drug Abuse Resistance Education or DARE program of the DPS.

"What we are doing is we are certifying these individual young officers to become instructors. They go out to public schools and they teach our children about how to successfully counteract drugs," said Mafnas.

According to him, there are a lot of new drugs being used by high school and college students across the nation, including ecstasy.

"I hope and pray that that drug doesn't come in here into the Commonwealth, if it's not already here," said Mafnas. "We

want to safeguard our community, our young children, so they don't get dragged into that kind of environment."

He said they are working on implementing a more rigorous screening process in CNMI borders so that drug traffickers will find it harder to bring in illegal drugs through incoming cargo.

Mafnas is counting on community involvement and participation in the fight against illegal drugs "so we can take care of our people and visitors."

Admin lauds businesses for participating in wage study

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, along with acting Commerce secretary Sixto Igisomar, wish to extend their appreciation to the members of the business community who have completed the questionnaires for the Prevailing Wages and Workforce Assessment Study in the midst of striving to meet the deadline for filing CWI petitions.

This project is a census of prevailing wages paid to employees by all licensed businesses in the CNMI estimated to be close to or more than 2,000. This census will also capture important information on the demographics of the labor force, including but not limited to employee skills, citizenship, and ethnicity as of October 2011.

The first part of this survey, the Prevailing Wages sec-

tion, is slated to be completed by the end of this month. The Workforce Assessment is projected to be completed in February. The results of the Prevailing Wages will be made available at the Department of Labor while the Workforce Assessment will be made available through publication and through the Department of Commerce's website at www.commerce.gov.mp

Fitial and Inos continue to encourage the remaining businesses on Saipan, Rota, and Tinian to complete the questionnaires and return them to the enumerators.

Any questions or comments can be directed to Ivan A. Blanco via email: director.csd@commerce.gov.mp or at telephone numbers: 664-3045/3025/3023. (*Office of the Governor*)

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Samsung GALAXY Tab 10.1
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The Galaxy Tab 10.1 is a complete overhaul compared to the original 7 inch Galaxy Tab. The new 10.1 offers a larger 10.1 inch Hi-res touch screen display, pre-loaded with Android 3.1 Honeycomb OS, and claims to be the thinnest tablet in the world!

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This gaming phone sports dedicated gaming controls on a slide-out pad, a large screen, and a 2nd-generation Snapdragon processor. Other key features include 5-megapixel camera, front-facing camera, 3.5mm audio jack, mobile Wi-Fi hotspot, full browser with Adobe Flash, memory card slot, DLNA wireless media streaming.

CASIO G'zOne COMMANDO™
\$299+

This Android 2.2 FROYO CDMA smartphone is notable for its rugged, waterproof design. Other key features include compass, thermometer, pedometer, a high-resolution touch display, and extra-loud speaker. Rounding out the features are a 5-megapixel camera, Wi-Fi with mobile hotspot, EVDO 3G data, and memory card slot.

SANYO ZIO™
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This Android smartphone is notable for its large, high-resolution display and 3G EVDO data. Other features include 3-megapixel camera, Wi-Fi, accelerometer, 3.5mm headphone jack, and memory card slot.

Samsung Showcase
\$199+

Part of Samsung's Galaxy S series, this high-end Android smartphone sports a huge 4-inch OLED display, fast 1 GHz processor, and 5-megapixel camera with LED flash and video capture. Other features include Bluetooth 3.0, Wi-Fi with DLNA streaming, and a 3.5mm audio jack.

htc EVO™ 3D
\$299+

This update to the EVO 4G adds 3D screen and camera, including video, plus a faster 3rd-generation dual-core Snapdragon processor. Other features include Android 2.3, HTC's Sense interface, a huge, high-resolution display, and HD video output to TV. Other features include Wi-Fi, memory card slot, and 3.5mm audio jack. The EVO 3D is surely a phone that will blow away the competition!

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Labor reviewing employer compliance with USCIS rules

The CNMI Labor Department is reviewing employer compliance with USCIS rules, according to director Alfred Pangelinan yesterday.

"We are looking at how employers sought U.S. citizen applicants. USCIS rules require a reasonable effort to locate qualified U.S. citizen applicants, and we are finding ads that do not comply with this standard," Pangelinan said.

He referred to ads that have been determined to have failed

the "reasonable" standard because they were intended to discourage rather than encourage U.S. citizens from applying.

"Some employers make themselves obscure in their job announcements, like 'we are just advertising for the sake of compliance with the law but we really do not want you to know who we are or see you. Just send your resume by e-mail' (another obscure e-mail address)—that kind of thing," Pangelinan said.

"There are some employers

who say 'no walk-ins accepted.' In others, the location of the business was not given or the business name appears to be one of those corporations with more than one ['doing business as']. It is more problematic for U.S. citizens to apply when they have no idea who the business is or where the business is located. Normally, employers would want jobseekers to know about them, the benefits they offer and opportunities for right applicants so job-

seekers will make their choice on the company they want to apply and work. That would meet the legal standard of reasonableness. When employers do the opposite—discourage job seekers from applying—then they are not complying with CNMI law or USCIS rules," Pangelinan said.

The CNMI Labor Department has always had jurisdiction to enforce federal labor laws, Pangelinan pointed out. The department will enforce

the CNMI reasonableness requirement just like it enforces the federal minimum wage laws and other federal labor laws.

"The department is reviewing ads for compliance with CNMI law and federal rules and will be providing 'negative information' to USCIS with respect to ads that do not meet reasonable standards," Pangelinan said.

USCIS considers negative information in deciding whether to grant an application to employ an alien under the tempo-

rary permit system.

"In addition, of course," Pangelinan said, "current CNMI law requires all employers who intend to employ aliens to advertise the job on the Labor Department's website. Failure to do so will result in a citation and a fine if a Labor Department enforcement officer finds this violation. Once a hearing officer hears these cases, the order (as negative information) can be sent to USCIS as well." (*Labor*)

Man'amko serenade hospital, lawmakers with carols

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Now it's their turn to do caroling.

The *man'amko* visited the Commonwealth Health Center and the House chamber yesterday, singing classic Christmas songs to spread holiday cheer and joy.

The group was composed of Saipan Seniors Advisory Council chair Teresita Sorroza, vice chair Maria Salinas, member Meryalen Conrad, and congregates Jacoba Asuncion, Isabel Bodiogan, Herminia Faisao, Terry Sitae, Jose Torres, Elizabeth Yi, and Jesus Pangelinan who played the guitar accompaniment.

They were accompanied by Aging Center program coordinator Walter Manglona and staffer Alex Laniyo.

The group first went to the hospital where they sang Christmas songs in Chamorro and English at the lobby, drawing applause from hospital staff and other spectators.

Koblerville resident Kalmor Datius, who was in the hospital to visit a family member, said the *man'amko*'s performance helped bring the Christmas spir-

it to the hospital.

"It's good," said Datius who recorded the presentation using his phone's video camera.

Another hospital visitor who lives in Chalan Kanoa said that hearing Christmas carols gives hope to patients and their family members.

"A lot of people here aren't feeling the holidays because it's a hospital. People want to feel better so this is nice. It's all about the Christmas spirit," he said.

Among the spectators at CHC yesterday was Dr. Dan Lamar, acting director for Medical Affairs, who commended the *man'amko* for bringing the Christmas spirit to the hospital.

"It brings the joy of Christmas into the hospital. It makes people here feel at home and let them know that there are people who support and care for them in their difficult times. It certainly shows the community's spirit of working together to help meet everyone's needs," Lamar told *Saipan Tribune*.

Council chair Sorroza said it's not the *man'amko* being sung to this time. "We want to share our love for the community, especially those who are sick. The

spirit of Christmas is not just for the healthy. We are here to cheer the sick and we wish them to get well soon."

Following their CHC visit, the group proceeded to the House chamber on Capital Hill where they sang several Christmas songs.

"We are wishing all of you here on the hill, which is closer to heaven, a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year," Sorroza said, to the delight of the 10 lawmakers and their staffers.

Rep. Joseph Palacios (R-Saipan) said: "It's always pleasure listening to them. It's very joyful."

Palacios, a former director of the Aging Center, shared his wish for the island's elderly. "I'd like to wish them the merriest Christmas of all, good health for themselves and their families. I know times are hard but I hope they put it in their hearts that families come first and as long as they're together with all their loved ones, I believe that Christmas should be great for everyone."

House Speaker Eli Cabrera (R-Saipan) lauded the *man'amko*'s efforts to visit them



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Some of the congregates at the Aging Center bring the spirit of Christmas to hospital patients and family members as they sing holiday classics at the lobby of the Commonwealth Health Center yesterday morning.

and the patients at the hospital.

"They are our elderly but they make effort to come visit us and sing for us and we're glad that they sang also in our language," he said.

Cabrera noted the value of senior citizens in the community. "Because of them, we're here

today...I wish to see them again next year and I hope they'll be back here again next year."

A small basket was passed around, where lawmakers and staffers chipped in spare cash for the carolers.

The group decided to divide the amount, which totaled \$84,

among themselves, with each receiving \$7 each. Manglona and Torres, however, decided to donate their shares to the *man'amko* funds.

The *man'amko* carolers also received a digital copy of their performance and were served refreshments.

Magazine names 2011 Executive of the Year nominees

TAMUNING, Guam—*Guam Business Magazine* announced yesterday the names of the nominees for the 2011 Executive of the Year.

They are: James L. Adkins, president of East West Rental Center Inc.; Michael R. Ady, president of M80 Systems Inc.; John T. Calvo, president and general manager of Mid-Pacific Distributors Inc.; Ronald E. Cannoles, executive vice president and Pacific Islands division manager, Bank of Hawaii; Eloy S. Lizama, executive vice president, chief operating officer, and chief financial officer of IP&E Holdings LLC; and Jay R. Shedd, president and chief executive officer of Docomo Pacific.

The annual Executive of the Year award recognizes executives who have made outstanding contributions to the business community and raised the bar in the field in which they are involved.

Past recipients include Robert H. Jones of Triple J Enterprises (1983); William R. Thompson of Aon Insur-

ance Micronesia (1997); John K. Lee of First Hawaiian Bank (1998); Marian Aldan-Pierce of DFS Saipan (2000); Juan T. Guerrero of Herman's Modern Bakery Inc. (2003); David M. Sablan of Century Group of Companies (2005); Laura Lynn V. Dacanay of First Hawaiian Bank (2008); Jerry Tan of Tan Holdings (2009); and Lourdes A. "Lou" Leon Guerrero of Bank of Guam (2010).

Guam Business Magazine will celebrate the 29th *Guam Business Magazine* Executive of the Year award at a gala on Jan. 14, 2012, at the Hyatt Regency Guam. The name of the

winner has traditionally been held secret by the magazine until the announcement of the winner at the gala.

The January-February issue of *Guam Business Magazine*, featuring a commissioned portrait of the winner on its cover, will also be unveiled that night.

Proceeds from the gala will benefit the Guam Chapter of the American Red Cross.

Tickets for the Jan. 14 award gala, at \$1,500 per table or \$150 per person may be purchased from Chita Blaise, executive director of the American Red Cross by calling 472-6217 or by emailing arcguam1@ite.net. (*PR*)

3 Saipan beach sites red-flagged

The Division of Environment Quality has red-flagged the North Laulau Beach, Jeffries Beach, and Unai Dangkulo and is advising the public not to fish or swim within 300 feet of these locations for the next 48 hours or until otherwise notified.

DEQ said that samples collected from these locations had excessive concentrations

of fecal indicator bacteria (enterococci) that exceeded the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards. These bacteria can indicate the presence of human and animal waste in the water. Water samples were taken from 12 locations on Saipan this week. For more information, contact DEQ at 664-8500. (*DEQ*)

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/S/ ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
ACTING SECRETARY OF DLNR

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

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CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB12-DLNR/SWCD-033**

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AND SEDIMENT BASIN 2 (KWP) FOR THE DEPT.
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/S/ ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
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/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

DANNY LAMBERT,
Petitioner,

Vs.

JINPING SHI
LAMBERT,
Respondent.

FCD-DI CIVIL
ACTION
NO. 11-0493

SUMMONS
FOR
PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED
RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 501152, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at P.O. Box 500307 Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief in the Complaint.

DATED, this 6th day of December,

/s/ Clerk of Court

AMP to host 'Artist Night'; holiday sale ongoing

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The American Memorial Park Bookstore is hosting for the first time an event that offers great deals on store items and gives customers a chance to have their purchased book or artwork signed by the author or artist.

"Artist Night" is scheduled next Wednesday, Dec. 21, from 4pm to 7pm.

The book and art-signing event is an idea that the new bookstore manager, Rhea Richardson, came up with and organized with administrators in Guam and Hawaii to promote the store's merchandise and the Park's amenities, said Park Ranger Susan Fishman-Tudor.

Fishman-Tudor said they invited several local authors and artists for the "Artist Night" where they will have the opportunity to meet with those who bought their works and sign them.

The invited authors and artists include retired chief justice Jose S. Dela Cruz, Lino Olopai, Joe Weaver, Greg Elliott, and Jung Ae Lee.

MMAC team captains' meeting today

The 2012 Marianas March Against Cancer Committee will be holding its next team captains' meeting today, Dec. 15, 2011, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room. The meeting will begin promptly at 5:30pm.

"After receiving community feedback, the 2012 MMAC committee has decided that getting an early start is needed in order to ensure all teams get ample time to prepare for this great event. We're inviting all 2011 MMAC teams to attend as well as all schools, businesses, non-profit organizations, government agencies or families interested in participating in MMAC 2012," said 2012 MMAC overall committee chair Catherine Attao-Toves.

Items to be discussed include the financial report from the Commonwealth Cancer Association and proposed changes for MMAC 2012. The CCA will be presenting a report detailing how all funds raised at the MMAC are used for cancer patient assistance and other cancer-related services.

"We will discuss some important changes for the 2012 MMAC so the participation of all teams is extremely appreciated. With the holiday season in full swing, we hope all interested members of the community find the time to attend this important meeting in support of the battle against cancer," said Attao-Toves.

For more information on the 2012 MMAC, email attao20@gmail.com or emanuel.borja@gmail.com. (MMAC)

"We have a lot of good products at the bookstore that people don't realize are for sale," said

Fishman-Tudor.

The bookstore also has an ongoing promotion where patrons

can avail of 15 percent discount on all regular-priced items. Other items at the bookstore such



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Some of the discounted items at the American Memorial Park bookstore are seen in this photo. The bookstore will host "Artist Night" on Dec. 21 from 4pm to 7pm and is having an ongoing holiday sale until Dec. 31.

Christmas in the Marianas on Dec. 17

The Marianas Visitors Authority and the Marianas Walking Association invite the community and visitors to share holiday cheer in celebrating the 10th Annual Christmas in the Marianas this Saturday, Dec. 17.

This year's holiday celebration will feature a health walk along Saipan Beach Pathway, a parade of floats in downtown Garapan, and an evening of caroling and pageantry at the American Memorial Park amphitheater.

"Christmas in the Marianas was started 10 years ago to give visitors an opportunity to share in the holiday celebration with our community," said MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas. "More than

ever, this year's event will be an opportunity to celebrate the season and lift each others spirits, without spending an extra dime. We encourage everyone to mark their calendars for this Saturday."

The celebration will kick off with the Christmas in the Marianas Health Walk at 5pm from American Memorial Park. Free T-shirts will be given to the first 50 participants. The short course will turn around at Triple J Motors in Chalan Laulau and the long course will turnaround at the MVA office in Oleai.

Following the walk, the parade of floats will assemble at the Garapan Fishing Base at 5pm. The parade begins after 5:30pm

at the Carolinian Affairs Office and proceed through downtown Garapan along Beach Road to the American Memorial Park. Beach Road will be closed along the parade route until approximately 7:30pm.

"We'd like to extend our sincerest thanks to the Department of Public Safety, the Public School System, and other agencies and organizations whose help and participation has made it possible for our community and visitors to enjoy Christmas in the Marianas this year," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio.

The Attire/Caroling Competition will be held at the park after the parade until 9pm. (MVA)

as books, CDs, stuffed animals, maps, and military insignia are already on sale, she said.

Fishman-Tudor said their merchandise at the bookstore are great gift ideas and stocking stuffers for the holidays.

The holiday sale, which began on Dec. 14, will run until the end of the month. "This promotion is also our way to give back to the community," she said.

Besides the bookstore, guests can avail of other services at the park, which include a museum exhibit and free movie presentations.

"People can bring the whole family here and learn about

their own history," Fishman-Tudor told *Saipan Tribune*.

She urged the community to check out the American Memorial Park and the various items that the Park bookstore offers.

"This park exists for the people. It commemorates the fallen civilian and military population during the invasion of Saipan. It's a living memorial so I hope they visit us and learn more about the history of the islands," said Fishman-Tudor.

The American Memorial Park is open Monday to Sunday from 10am to 5pm except on Christmas, New Year, and Thanksgiving. For more information, call 234-7207 ext. 2020.

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Morning Classes include:
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Afternoon Classes PE Classes:
Mon-Field Day, Soccer, Capture the Flag, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.
Wed-Swimming at CK Beach Club
Thur-J&P Golf Academy with a Golf Pro Instructor
Tue/Fri-2 types of Dance Classes: Cultural and Hip-Hop
-Music Classes: Acoustic, Classical and Contemporary
-Indoor games: Jeopardy, Wheel of Fortune, etc.

Saturdays include:
-Morning Educational Trips: Museum Tour, Fire Station, American Memorial Park, etc.
-Afternoon Fun trips such as going to PIC Water Park, Jungle Wave, Jungle Trekking, Managaha and many more!

***Mon-Sat: FREE Waiting Room until 7 PM**

Little fire ant found in more sites in Guam

» No evidence yet of little fire ants in NMI

As of the first week in December, Guam's newest invasive species, the little fire ant, has been found in Yigo, Nimitz Hill, Piti, Santa Rita, Umatac, and Merizo.

"Thanks to the rapid response of the public in bringing in ant samples to my lab as well as to the Government of Guam territorial entomologist, Russ Campbell, we have been able to get a good idea as to where little fire ant populations are located. The next step is to get a plan in place to contain it," said Ross Miller, University of Guam's entomologist.

It is evident from the number of places the ant has been found that it is being transported around the island by people.

"It is necessary for the control of this ant that people stop moving plants, soil, and plant material including banana, heliconia, coconut husks, and fronds and to be especially mindful if they are bitten by tiny ants when working in their yards or ranches," warned Miller.

He would like people to continue to bring samples to his lab or to call 475-PEST (475-7378) if they discover ant activity they believe may be the little fire ant. Banana growers should be vigilant, as the little fire ant loves to



Little fire ants found under banana leaf on Guam.

make its home in the leaves next to the trunk. Peel the leaf back to see if there are any fire ant colonies present.

People can bring ant samples to UOG College of Natural and Applied Sciences dean's office during weekday business hours. It is important that the ants are placed in a container with a tight fitting lid, preferably in alcohol, and labeled with the person's name, phone number, date, and location where it was collected.

At this time there is no evidence

of little fire ants in the CNMI.

Everyone is asked to do their part to see that this ant is not spread to other Micronesian islands. Follow all Customs and Quarantine rules and regulations. Do not bring in or take out plants or soil as they may contain unwanted hitchhikers like the three invasive species that are currently wreaking havoc on Guam: the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, and Asian cycad scale.

"Any invasive species we find

on Guam poses a threat to our neighboring islands due to our frequent air and sea connections," said Miller, "If people follow the rules and get a permit and certificate to bring in plants this will ensure that no unwanted pests will be accidentally introduced and could save the government millions of dollars trying to eradicate an invasive species."

For more information, contact Dr. Miller at 735-2141 or Dr. Campbell at 475-1426. (UOG)

Cabrera and Smith earn Eagle Scout rank

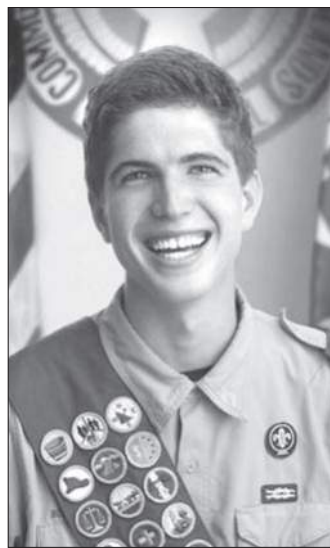
Don Marshall Davis Cabrera and Harrison Matthew Smith, both 17 years old, from CNMI Boy Scout Troop 913, have earned the rank of Eagle Scout, and a Court of Honor will be held for them on Sunday, Dec. 18, at 7pm at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The public is invited to attend the ceremony.

To be a Boy Scout, one is required to attend campouts, earn merit badges, and demonstrate specific skills that are physically and mentally challenging. Prior to earning the rank of Eagle, scouts have the opportunity to learn and master many skills. They've hikes and camped in good and not-so-good weather, and they've learned to take care of themselves and others in the outdoors as well as in their community. Becoming an Eagle requires that they master yet another set of skills. One of these skills is their demonstration of leadership. An Eagle Scout candidate is asked to plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project that is helpful to a religious institution, school, or the community. As a result of these demanding requirements, less than 5 percent of scouts worldwide attain this goal.

Cabrera, son of Joseph C. Cabrera and Shawn Davis, accomplished the rehabilitation



Cabrera



Smith

of Unai Dangkulu, a historical site adjacent to the Coral Ocean Point golf course. Included in the project was bush cutting, chopping any unnecessary trees, trimming tree branches, clearing the top of the bunker/pillbox of grass and overgrowth, clearing the steps down to the beach, and cleaning up of all debris. Cabrera's project took volunteers three full days in April to complete.

"Don successfully completed a very dignified project since it

involved the restoration of a historical site," said former CNMI Boy Scouts island director Cal Reyes, in April at the time of the project. "He served not only as a good example for his fellow scouts in Troop 913 to preserve and restore historical sites but also to the entire community."

Smith, son of F. Matthew and Christina Smith, orchestrated an environmental mural painted on the tennis practice wall of the American Memorial Park. Smith said it took 26

volunteers about a week to complete the mural. Two gallons of primer, two gallons of sealant, and 38 quarts of paint were used to complete the project. Volunteers, including Smith's art teacher, power washed the wall, primed it, blocked in the mural, added the outlines, painted the underwater image, and then sealed the wall.

In June, at the time of the presentation of the completed mural, American Memorial Park ranger Nancy Kelchner said the project turned out to be an excellent educational tool.

"Not only has a student and boy scout originated the idea but he also planned the project and made sure that the project came to fruition. That's a lot for a teenager. It goes to show that young folks have great potential. Their ideas shouldn't be discounted by adults. They should be heard," she said.

Both Cabrera and Smith were born on Saipan and began their scouting careers with Cub Scout Pack 913 at the age of 8 where they earned the Arrow of Light, the highest award given to a Cub Scout. At 11 years they advanced into the Boy Scout program and have been working toward their Eagle advancement for six years.

The public is invited to attend the ceremony of Honor and all Eagle Scouts residing in the CNMI are especially invited to attend this Court of Honor. (PR)

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 15, 1999

AGO rejects request to sanction Bellas

The Attorney General's Office has no authority to take disciplinary action against Superior Court Judge Timothy H. Bellas for alleged improper judicial conduct as this is the sole responsibility of the Legislature, according to acting Attorney General Maya B. Kara. It is only through impeachment that Bellas can be removed, suspended or sanctioned due to allegations of improprieties, conflicting duties, extra-judicial and political activities leveled by his arch-critic, Rep.-elect Stanley T. Torres. AGO recommended pursuing this matter with the Legislature "so that [it] may determine if the conduct of Judge Bellas which you believe is either illegal or inappropriate merits disciplinary proceedings through impeachment process," said Kara in a letter to Torres.

Proposed site for public cemetery rejected

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio has disapproved a bill designating a six-hectare site in Marpi for the new public cemetery on Saipan due to unavailability as well as inappropriateness of the identified lots. He said the measure should address other concerns, such as which lead agency to oversee operations of the proposed cemetery, before the Legislature can pass similar legislation in the future. Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider, proponent of House Bill 11-413, expressed disappointment over the governor's veto, but asked support of lawmakers for a new proposal correcting "minor technical provisions."

Dec. 15, 2000

Senate, House try to reach budget deal

Senate and House conferees began yesterday what they expect as "marathon meetings" to hammer out a budget pact acceptable to both chambers by early next year. They emerged "positive" and "optimistic" at the end of the first day of talks held at the Senate conference room in Capitol Hill hoping to reach later on a compromise on the FY 2001 spending package. House Ways and Means Committee chair Rep. Antonio M. Camacho and Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Edward U. Maratita are leading six lawmakers tasked to come up with a deal in the negotiating table.

Officials meet to settle Tinian High School dispute

Settlement discussions are expected to transpire today between the Public School System and Guerrero Brothers Inc. following efforts by the State Board of Education and legislators to fast-track the six-year-old Tinian High School project. BOE members and the Tinian Legislative Delegation will facilitate the negotiations on Tinian today in another attempt to seek an end to the long-standing dispute between PSS and GBI. BOE Vice Chair Roman C. Benavente said the campus project's delay has already caused enough strain among parties involved, as well as to the community in general. "It is conflicting everyone—the students, legislators, educators...We want to settle it once and for all so that we can resume with the campus construction and expedite other PSS projects," said Mr. Benavente.

Dec. 15, 2002

Heinz reintroduces Film Office measure

Conceding to the House's role in allowing passage of a revenue-generating measure that was "legally unsound," Speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider introduced a similar measure to repeal and reenact the public law that established the NMI Film Office. Public Law 13-29, which originated from the Senate, has provisions that set fines and fees which the lower House has sole domain over. "The House and the Senate are equally at fault [on this]. So I am introducing legislation that would repeal and reenact Public Law 13-29 in its entirety, with minor changes," Hofschneider said on the floor, during a regular session Friday.

NMI hotel sector's contributions up

The Commonwealth's hotel industry is beginning to reclaim its position as one of the major contributors to the government's nearly emptied coffers, indicated by an increasing trend in hotel occupancy tax collection since the first quarter of the fiscal year 2002. A report released by the Central Statistics Division of the commerce department revealed a 3-percent increase in hotel occupancy tax collection during the third quarter of FY2002, from \$1.33 million in the second quarter to \$1.37 million. Hotel occupancy tax collection has been on a steady growth since the October-December 2001 period, climbing by 2.3 percent—\$1.30 million—to \$1.33 million in the succeeding comparable three-month period.

ATTENTION ALL EAGLE SCOUTS

Please join Troop 913's Eagle Nest
on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 7pm
at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Island Snapshots



COURTESY CALLS

From left, Sen. Ralph Torres, Senate President Paul Manglona, immigration and human rights lawyer Ted Laguatan, who is also the spokesperson and legal counsel of US Pinoys for Good Governance (USP4GG), Dr. Celia B. Lamkin, president of US Pinoys for Good Governance (Marianas Chapter) Guam-CNMI USP4GG Representative; and Josephine Laguatan, Laguatan's wife.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Senate President Paul A. Manglona, immigration and human rights lawyer Ted Laguatan, Dr. Celia B. Lamkin, and Mrs. Josephine Laguatan at the Senate Chamber. Laguatan and his wife arrived on Saipan recently for a humanitarian mission to help Filipinos and other foreign workers in their immigration issues. Laguatan conducted a four-hour immigration forum sponsored by the USP4GG on Dec. 8, 2011, at the Marianas Business Plaza lobby.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



HOLIDAY TRADITION

Seven members of the Korean Women's Association of Saipan smile for the camera before handing out gift bags for the man'amko at the Aging Center on Tuesday.

CLARISSA V. DAVID



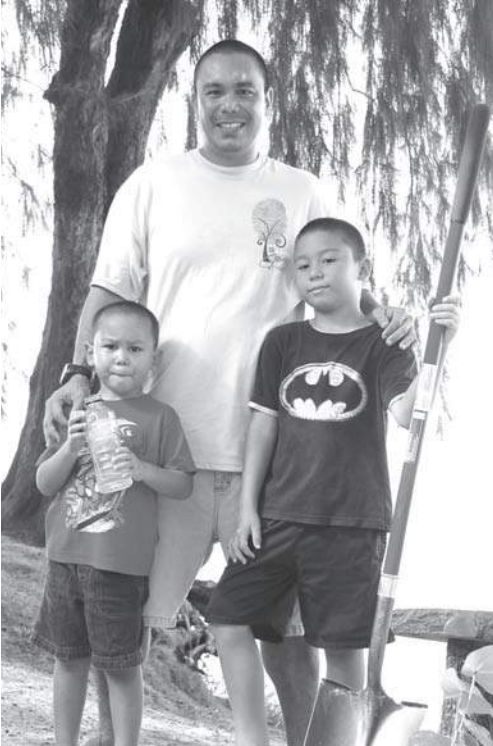
Aging director Rose Mondala, left, hands out a gift bag from the Korean Women's Association to Saipan Seniors Advisory Council chair Teresita Sorroza on Tuesday.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

TREE PLANTING

Dr. Ryan Okano, ecologist at the Division of Environmental Quality and board member of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance, smiles for the camera with his two sons at the launching of the Tan Holdings tree planting project at the Susupe Beach Park last Saturday.

CLARISSA V. DAVID



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



Happy birthday to Roy C. Tudela, who is celebrating his special day today, Dec 15! We love you! Greetings come from Dad, Mom, Draven, Franko Ray, Grandpa, Grandma, and Nina Shar

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Happy 9th birthday to our Neni girl, Jada Aleah, and may you have many, many more birthdays to come, God bless you always! We love you! Greetings come from Mommy, Darie, Darrell, and Darren

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Tan Holdings president Jerry Tan, left, poses with executives, managers, and employees after the tree planting event held at the Susupe Beach Park on Dec. 10.

CLARISSA V. DAVID

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Smartphones, dumb drivers

Can you safely talk on a cellphone—or for that matter, check your email or scroll through Google Maps—while driving? Well, of course you can. But those other folks with their hands off the wheel and their eyes off the road are a public menace.

Unfortunately, that sums up the attitude of many American motorists, who widely acknowledge using their phones while behind the wheel but insist they're safe drivers. Meanwhile, the number of people worried about the other guy is soaring. When the state Office of Traffic Safety asked California drivers to name the biggest safety problem on the road, nearly 40 percent listed drivers who use cellphones. That's a big jump from last year, when the top worry was aggressive drivers and speeders, and only 18.3 percent were concerned about cellphones.

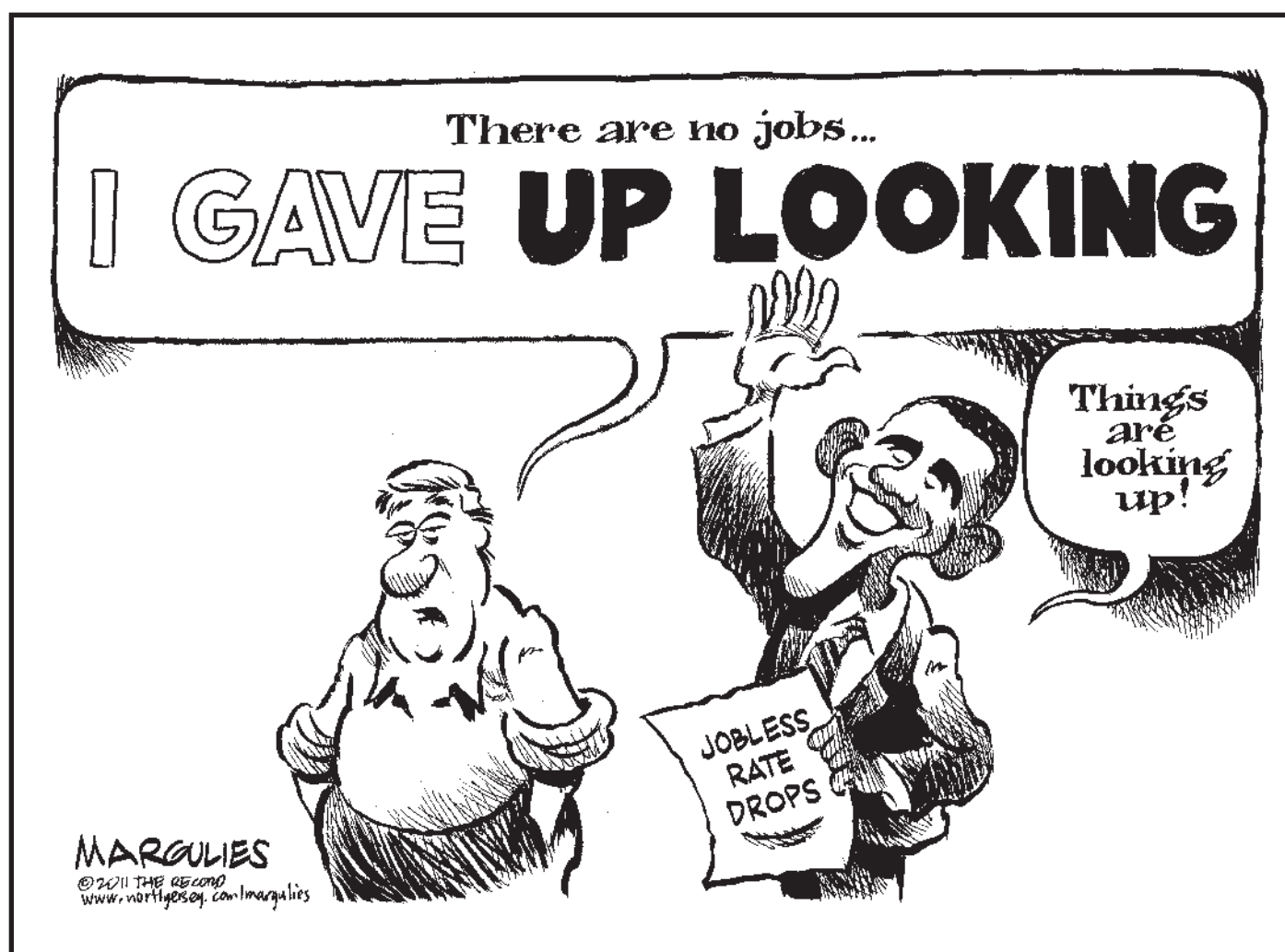
So what changed? Probably the explosion of smartphones, which aren't so much phones as portable computers—and which, like a computer, require both eyes and often both hands, meaning that, in our view, drivers should never operate them. But they do. More than one in four Americans who download applications to their smartphones admit to using those apps while driving, according to a survey by Nationwide Mutual Insurance. And the number of people with smartphones is growing fast. U.S. sales of smartphones are expected to hit 95 million in 2011, and 43 percent of mobile phone owners have smartphones; soon it will be a majority.

Motorists have good reason to worry about this. Studies show that people talking on their cellphones are four times more likely to be in an accident than other drivers, and their level of impairment is comparable to people with a blood alcohol level of 0.08 percent, the legal limit. And that research was done back when cellphones were used only for making calls. Now that they're used for posting on Facebook or playing Angry Birds, we suspect the dangers are much greater.

Lawmakers haven't caught up. Thirty states ban cellphone use by novice drivers, but none do so for all drivers. California has a law that tries to limit the problem but aims at the wrong target. Here, it's forbidden to text while driving or to hold a cellphone to one's ear, but drivers over 18 can still talk using a hands-free device; moreover, it's still technically legal to use a smartphone app while behind the wheel. This is both outdated and ineffective. There is no evidence that using hands-free devices reduces cellphone-related accidents, which happen because drivers are distracted by their conversations, not because they're using one hand to hold a phone.

A total cellphone ban would avoid the problem of legislating for yesterday's technology, and reduce the number of accidents. Meanwhile, if you value your life and the lives of others, don't dial and drive.

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Teaching the English language

It is a measure of the incredible influence of the King James version of the Bible that English is spoken around the world. The book of the Protestant missionaries went along with the colonial masters' muskets in the same way as the crucifix traveled with the conquistadores' sword.

English is now an undisputed global language, not only of commerce and finance, but also of technology and communication. The question is, which English? Churchill said that the British and Americans are one people divided by a common language; Bernard Shaw lamented the fact that both people, in many respect alike, lack a common language.

Perhaps that is the strength of the organic lingo from old Celtic married to the Germanic Angles, later intruded upon by the Normans with their conquering Gallic-Iberian roots, making the language ideal for Europe. In Brussels, only 20 percent of EU documents at the outset were in English; now, submissions are hitting 60 percent.

Crossing the Atlantic were English speakers confident that they were to teach the King's language to the New World. In the magnificent rendition of the Greek *logos* in John's Gospel, "*In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God*," the word picked up an Elizabethan accent, became flesh and dwelt amongst us. Not always pleasantly so, some would add, but that goes with the whole imperial operatic libretto. The witness echoes from Wellington to the Hudson, New Delhi to Sydney, Kingston to Durban, Toronto to Oahu, California to Singapore.

While jurisprudence remains littered with the "whereas" and "wherefores" that echoes in salas with gowned wigs, bureaucratise code piles on paperwork of government bureaus and agencies' file cabinets. A technocrat colleague confesses to listening to the poetry of the street to keep her sanity from the inanity of bound operating documents, manual of operations and program procedures lining many professional office shelves that she has to peruse but hardly anyone uses. They are properly crafted PhDs, edited by the grammar book and vetted by librarians.

Occasionally, cries to maintain the purity of the language issues from legislative halls, even among churches who are convinced that God speaks with a stiff upper lip, but the polyglot from the Caribbean patois to UC Berkeley's Ebonics, the Boston-by-the river to the Aloha clipper, the Texas drawl and the southern soul, the Appalachian Kluxer to the Louisiana hustler speaks not of one English but of many dialects.

Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe taught to his Man Friday his first word: "Master," a telling indication of the imperial GB's move to the rest of the world. The culture that freighted the language came along with the lingua's flavor, along with the uniformed troops, save in our time the uniform bears the proud eagle of the Americana.

We speak English in the CNMI not because Nihonggo, Aleman, Español, and any of the Austronesia dialects are inadequate; rather, it is that English now spreads a wide context so broad that Austrian

By JAIME VERGARA

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime R. Vergara (jrvergarajr2031@aol.com) is a former PSS teacher and is currently writing from the campus of Shenyang Aerospace University in China.



UN General Secretary Kurt Waldheim sent a golden disk on a space ship explaining the peaceful mission of the vehicle, in English. We speak English in order to be part of the globe!

For the same reason, we have taken it as our task to glocalize Zhongguoren's linguistic orientation. *Putunghua* is quite adequate to 15 percent of the world's population resident in China and scattered in many Chinatowns around the world but if the centrifugal force of the yin-yang is inward looking and supremely self-confident in its self-sufficiency and self-reliance, the centripetal force is relational and subject to the whims of the 85 percent it intends to relate to, a bit problematic given that the Zhongguo's corporate social face holds a premium value.

Restating that last sentence, the Chinese is conditioned to keep up a good face, while English is a language that has evolved as a self-expression of authenticity and what is objectively real. China's face open's with Tiananman's plaza; the new face in English is the persona.

A professor writes a scientific brief of his experiment to make steel stronger and lighter but his write-up of this relevant transport issues is lost in the translation. The write-up is technical and abstract, and most journal treatises are often of the same caliber. This is the same written and read English (along with its legalese form) that is taught in universities, and alas, also in the academic halls of the CNMI.

Thus, Oral English students expect to learn *about* oral English, rather than use it. Our pedagogy is focused on use and we begin by leaving the "face" outside the door, enticing students' persona to "describe their seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching experiences, express their feelings about it, relate their ideas and thoughts about it to those of others, and then indicate what they are going to do about the experience." It is the method we used while working with village folks around the world in an earlier pedagogical incarnation. (Our method is called "imaginal education" for those curious enough to want to Google the subject!)

An astute student (one I suspect was sent by the administration to spy on our teaching) came up after the last session and offered the following: "This course should be called Life 101." No quarrel here, and we trust she relays her observation elsewhere.

English, anyone?

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Free speech is in the cross hairs

This week in Washington, the United States is hosting an international conference obliquely titled “Expert Meeting on Implementing the U.N. Human Rights Resolution 16/18.” The impenetrable title conceals the disturbing agenda: to establish international standards for, among other things, criminalizing “intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of...religion and belief.”

The unstated enemy of religion in this conference is free speech, and the Obama administration is facilitating efforts by Muslim countries to “deter” some speech in the name of human rights.

Although the resolution also speaks to combating incitement to violence, the core purpose behind this and previous measures has been to justify those who speak against religion. The members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, or OIC, have been pushing for years to gain international legitimacy of their domestic criminal prosecutions of anti-religious speech.

This year, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton invited nations to come to implement the resolution and “to build those muscles” needed “to avoid a return to the old patterns of division.” Those “old patterns” include instances in which writers and cartoonists became the targets of protests by religious groups. The most famous such incident occurred in 2005 when a Danish newspaper published cartoons mocking the prophet Muhammad. The result were worldwide protests in which Muslims reportedly killed more than 100 people—a curious way to demonstrate religious tolerance. While Western governments reaffirmed the right of people to free speech after the riots, they quietly moved toward greater prosecution of anti-religious speech under laws prohibiting hate speech and discrimination.

The OIC members have long sought to elevate religious dogma over individual rights. In 1990, members adopted the Cairo Declaration, which rejected core provisions of the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights and affirmed that free speech and other rights must be consistent with “the principles of the sharia,” or Islamic law. The biggest victory of the OIC came in 2009 when the Obama administration joined in condemning speech containing “negative racial and religious stereotyping” and asked states to

“take effective measures” to combat incidents, including those of “religious intolerance.”

Then, in March, the U.S. supported Resolution 16/18’s call for states to “criminalize incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief.” It also “condemns” statements that advocate “hostility” toward religion. Although the latest resolution refers to “incitement” rather than “defamation” of religion (which appeared in the 2005 resolution), it continues the disingenuous effort to justify crackdowns on religious critics in the name of human rights law.

The OIC has hit on a winning strategy to get Western countries to break away from their commitment to free speech by repackaging blasphemy as hate speech and free speech as the manifestation of “intolerance.” Now, orthodoxy is to be protected in the name of pluralism—requiring their own notion of “respect and empathy and tolerance.” One has to look only at the OIC member countries, however, to see their vision of empathy and tolerance, as well as their low threshold for anti-religious speech that incites people. In September, a Kuwaiti court jailed a person for tweeting a message deemed derogatory to Shiites. In Pakistan last year, a doctor was arrested for throwing out a business card of a man named Muhammad because he shared the prophet’s name.

The core countries behind this effort show little tolerance or “empathy” themselves for opposing religions or viewpoints. Saudi Arabia will not allow the construction of a church in the kingdom, let alone allow public observance of other faiths. This year, the Saudi interior minister declared free speech to be an offense against God, declaring the kingdom “categorically (bans) all sorts of demonstrations, marches and sit-ins...as they contradict Islamic sharia law and the values and traditions of Saudi society.” Last week, Saudi courts sentenced an Australian Muslim to be flogged 500 times and sent to jail for “insulting” Muhammad.

What is more alarming, however, is the advancement of this agenda in Western countries. This year, Dutch legislator Geert Wilders secured a hard-fought acquittal from criminal charges after years of investigation and litigation for saying disrespectful things about Muslims. In Britain, a 15-year-old girl was arrested in No-

By JONATHAN TURLEY

Los Angeles Times

Jonathan Turley is a professor of public interest law at George Washington University. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.



vember 2010 for burning a Koran. Other religions are now following suit and calling for the arrest of those who utter criticisms of their faiths. French fashion designer John Galliano was convicted in September of uttering anti-Semitic remarks in an outburst in a restaurant. In Russia, two prominent art curators in Moscow who faced up to three years in prison for showing art that insulted the Russian Orthodox Church were fined in 2010. In Britain, a 15-year-old boy was given a criminal summons for holding up a sign declaring “Scientology is not a religion, it is a dangerous cult.”

Although the OIC and the Obama administration claim fealty to free speech, the very premise of the meeting reveals a desire to limit it. Many delegates presuppose that speech threatens faith, when it has been religious orthodoxy that has long been the enemy of free speech. Conversely, free speech is the ultimate guarantee of religious freedom.

History has shown that once you yield to the temptation to regulate speech, you quickly find yourself on a slippery slope as other divisive subjects are added to the list. This year, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., declared ominously that “free speech is a great idea, but we’re in a war.”

It seems that some have grown weary of free speech. After all, less speech means less division and discord. When the alternative is violent protests, silence is golden for governments. Of course, denying the right to speak does not create real tranquillity, only the illusion. But for these governments, including our own, an illusion may be as good as reality.

Letters to the Editor

Excuse me?!

Hafa adai, tiroow waami, and good day Marianas. I finally got a chance to sit and watch a good portion of John Gonzales’ show on the topic of legalizing casino on Saipan. I must say that I didn’t watch it in its entirety. It was torture listening to House Reps. Eli Cabrera, Felicidad Ogumoro, and Joseph Palacios preach about how casinos are the only fix to our ailing economy. Casinos, they say, would fix all our problems and bring us back into the good old days. They avoided the questions and instead continued their condescending lectures about how life is so hard and therefore we must pass this bill without any further delay. It was painful, to say the least.

I’d like to ask these House reps why they feel they must go against the people’s wishes and pass a bill to legalize casinos. I understand that they’ve spoken to “their constituents” but why can’t we put it up for another referendum? Why must they pass a bill without getting another accurate picture of how the majority feels about all this? Are we to just accept their decisions and believe that they know what’s best for us?

Palacios and Cabrera stated that they’ve never “heard” of crimes at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino. Are we supposed to just take their word for it? Instead, they should show us proof that they’ve done research and have concrete evidence that no crime has ever been committed there. It is not a secret that gambling brings in scores of social ills. So representatives, have you ever spoke to the people on Tinian about what sort of social issues plague their island? This is not a risk that everyone is comfortable with and definitely not everyone is willing to let you decide this for us. Show us the research you’ve done and no, we’re not asking you to take “fact-finding” trips to Macau and Vegas. It’s amazing what the Internet can do for you; just ask the kids.

Ti mudoru hami, todus ham en tingu’na makkat I lina’la’pa’go. Ti nisisariu na pon sangani ham put I baban ekonomia. We don’t need any politician to remind us that we’re in the “danger zone” or that we’re “suffering.” We’re reminded every day by having to make sacrifices none of you can even fathom!

So please, get to work on revitalizing our tourism industry! Marianas Visitors Authority needs a massive overhaul. I’m glad to hear that Commissioner Mafnas of DPS is looking into beefing up security in Garapan. Our leaders should call him up and offer their support. Our visitors need to feel safe before even considering to visit our islands.

As for trying to attract investors, why don’t we start by supporting our businesses that are already on island. How are we supposed to attract outside investors when our local businesses can’t even get their products from the port due to Customs delays? I’ve yet to hear about how any of you are taking steps to address this issue. I’m sure these investors would be more concerned about their businesses being able to run smoothly here versus how courteous our law enforcement at the airport are to them.

The one thing I do like about the new casino bill is that poker arcades are to be phased out of our villages. But again, are we to just take their word for it? They mentioned on the talk show that these poker arcades are crime ridden and unsafe for our villages. How about they show us how serious they are by phasing them out now!

They need not be reminded that the people have lost confidence in the legislative and executive branches of our government. They must be proactive and find out which hotels are willing to take in

these poker arcades. Let’s see how this works. Once the people have confidence in how gambling is conducted in these hotels, we can revisit the casino issue and put it up for another referendum.

Again, we don’t need to be reminded that these are harsh times and that we need another industry now. But please, let’s master our current industry, which is tourism and then we shall think about something else.

On a side note, I’d like to ask that everyone please do your part in keeping our islands clean. Talk to your children and others about how important it is. You’ve all probably heard that “tourism is everyone’s business.” It is very true, so please let’s all do our part to attract more visitors. Our beaches are the No. 1 reason why tourists visit, so please be especially aware of litter on our beaches. I saw on TV that Guam has started a litterbug program where people can call a hotline to report litterbugs. This is a good idea, I hope DPS can also look into implementing this in their enforcement efforts.

Kudos to www.exploresaipan.com for an awesome website. The Internet is definitely an effective way to attract visitors from around the world, not to mention the relatively low cost and mass audience.

Ron Muna

Saipan

Where not to go for holiday shopping

There are certainly many places here on the island that is great to go for your holiday shopping. We can go to one of the finest locally owned business such as Joeten, either at Susupe or the Hafadai Shopping Center in Garapan, or the 670 Rock Steady Shop at their new location in Gualo Rai, and so forth. It’s nice to know that most of the places both you and I know offer fantastic holiday discounts and some free giveaways.

The thing is, not all places can offer much to its valued customers. I’m not trying to mention any in particular but apparently this place is well-known to many youths and adults alike. I guess it is because of the variety it has to offer. It has that but certainly lacks the quality it truly deserves to show to its customers. I also believe it’s because it’s the closest thing to a mall here on Saipan.

My concern is because most of the products I’ve purchased from there as well as many others who can back me up with this have bought

items that have cracks, stains, a missing piece, color fading, open packaging, etc. Its reputation to the locals as well as the tourist is indeed in a positive way. The only thing is when you ask about the item you recently bought, they tend to forget about you being one of the valued customers and say no refund. Okay? Coming to this place in the last several days has made me discover more defects inside. Why? I’ve talked to the manager and got the answer: “Sorry, no refund but I’ll fix the problem right away.” I’ve decided to check up and apparently no changes whatsoever. Huh? I guess the only truthful thing is their company motto: “Let’s take all their money before they leave.” (I’m not making this up.) I just hope they have some heart to at least take a look at the item I bought before refusing a refund or exchange.






John Arriola

Koblerville, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Thundershowers	▲85 ▼78
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲85 ▼77
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲85 ▼79
Pohnpei	Showers	▲84 ▼77
Kosrae	Showers	▲84 ▼77
Majuro	Showers	▲84 ▼79

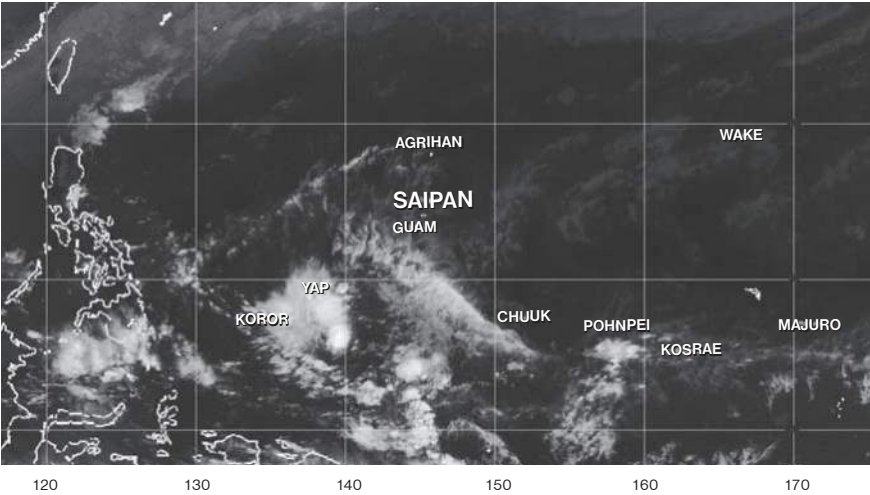
Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲68 ▼63
Beijing	Sunny	▲30 ▼15
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲65 ▼57
Honolulu	Sunny	▲82 ▼71
London	Showers	▲41 ▼35
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲61 ▼43
Manila	Thundershowers	▲86 ▼76
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲82 ▼54
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲78 ▼71
New York	Showers	▲54 ▼46
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲48 ▼39
Paris	Rain	▲44 ▼35
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲41 ▼26
Rome	Showers	▲63 ▼49
Salem	Showers	▲43 ▼35
San Francisco	Showers	▲57 ▼46
Seoul	Sunny	▲29 ▼20
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲47 ▼36
Washington, DC	Showers	▲58 ▼48

Tides

Saipan Harbor			
4:28 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
11:37 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
5:29 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
9:57 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.7 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2011

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Tropical Depression 27W is centered 300 miles southeast of Yap and approximately 435 miles east of Koror near 6N140E. It is moving westward at 18 mph with maximum sustained winds of 35 mph. Numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms are found within 60 miles of the center and in an extended area northwest of the center between Koror and Yap from 5N to 10N between 136E and 141E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are located southeast of td 27W and southwest of Chuuk from the equator to 6N between 144E and 148E. The area of the cloudiness south of the Marianas and west of Chuuk which is adjacent to the above areas is primarily upper level cloudiness with some embedded scattered showers. For more detailed information on Tropical Depression 27W, see bulletins issued by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN32 PGTW and by National Weather Service Guam under WMO header WTPQ32 PGUM. Well north of the Marianas a stationary front extends from 25N140E to beyond 130E at 21N. Cloudiness and patchy rain showers are found along and up to 400 miles northwest of this feature. The intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ) is visible today in a 150 mile wide band that travels through eastern Micronesia from just southwest of Pohnpei near 5N157E to 5N170E in the Marshalls to east of 6N180. This band contains patches of scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms elsewhere. High pressure dominates from 10N to 25N with a few westward moving north-south orientated lines of trade-wind showers.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Friday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Saturday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Sunday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Monday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:59 PM	9:58 AM
Friday	10:53 PM	10:41 AM
Saturday	11:47 PM	11:24 AM
Sunday		12:06 PM
Monday	12:43 AM	12:50 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

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- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

- Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

- the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 6, 2011

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) C05062 2:10am 2:40am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) C05064 5:15am 5:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN (SPN)-ROTA (ROP) C05064 4:15am 4:50am 1, 5	ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN (SPN) C05062 3:10am 3:45am 1, 5
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) C05070 4:15am 5:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05070 4:35am 5:25am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05068 8:25am 9:15am Daily C05074 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05076 3:10pm 4:00pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 6:50pm 7:40pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05078 7:00pm 7:50pm 3, 6 C05072 9:55pm 10:45pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05072 10:05pm 10:55pm 3, 6	GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN C05062 2:10am 3:45am 1, 5 via ROP C05069 2:45am 3:35am 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 C05071 7:00am 7:50am Daily C05073 10:05am 10:55am 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05075 1:40pm 2:30pm 1, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:30pm 6:20pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05077 5:40pm 6:30pm 3, 6 C05079 8:35pm 9:25pm 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 C05079 8:45pm 9:35pm 3, 6
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:35am Daily DL297 4:35pm 7:20pm Daily	NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL288 8:40pm 1:15am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily	SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:35am 7:05am 4, 7	BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 2:20am+1 3, 6
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6	GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7	SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:40pm 5:00am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05070/191 4:35am 9:45am 3, 6 via GUM DL287/173 6:00am 10:25pm Daily via NRT C05068/183 8:25am 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05068/183 8:25am 9:40pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:25pm 2, 5 via GUM C05076/183 3:10pm 9:40pm 1, 4, 7 via GUM C05076/193 3:10pm 11:00pm 2, 5 via GUM-Palau OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN C05072/PR111 9:55pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM C05072/PR111 10:05pm 7:50am+1 3, 6 via GUM	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN OZ704/603 12:10am 2:20pm Daily via ICN DL172/288 8:00am 1:15am+1 Daily via NRT C0190/5077 10:55am 6:30pm 3, 6 via GUM C0190/5079 10:55am 9:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN PR110/C05071 10:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 5, 7 via GUM C0192/5071 10:25pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM-Palau C0184/5071 11:10pm 7:50am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM C0184/5071 11:59pm 7:50am+1 2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 12:00pm 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 12:00pm 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN C05076/179 3:10pm 10:25pm 1, 5 via GUM OZ604/723 3:20pm 10:30pm Daily via ICN OZ604/749 3:20pm 11:00pm 1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN	HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ724/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ750/603 1:10am 2:20pm 1, 2, 4, 6 via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN C0180/5071 11:15pm 7:50am+1 1, 5 via GUM
LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 5K: FlyGuam; 3U: Sichuan Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana	
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)	

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 400	17:50	18:20	Daily	Tinian-Saipan			
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Business

IMF: Greece can't tax its people any further

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Greece has reached its limit in raising taxes and needs to refocus its austerity program on long-term spending cuts, the International Monetary Fund said Tuesday.

The warning came as the debt-shackled eurozone member heads toward its fourth year of recession, with revenues weakening despite draconian new emergency taxes.

"I think one of the things we have seen in 2011 is that we have reached the limit of what can be achieved through increasing taxes," Poul Thomsen, the IMF mission chief in Greece, told reporters in a conference call.

Thomsen, speaking about the IMF's latest report on Greece's progress, said the country's structural reforms have fallen "well short" of expectations. But he said it was too early to say whether new austerity measures would have to be taken next year.

Greece has relied on euro110 billion (\$145 billion) bailout loan package from eurozone countries and the IMF since May 2010 to stave off default. In return, it has taken a series of debt-reducing measures, including slashing salaries and pensions and imposing several rounds of tax hikes.

Greece's austerity program "has relied, in our view, too much on taxes and I think one of the things we have seen in 2011 is that we have reached the limit of what can be achieved through increasing taxes," Thomsen said. "Any further measures, if needed, should be on the expenditure side."

Greece has consistently missed defi-



Cattle farmers hand out dairy products to passers by in the city center of Thessaloniki, northern Greece, on Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011. The farmers were protesting the low market prices for their products. AP

cit reduction targets, and it quickly became clear that the initial bailout would not be enough to prevent a potentially catastrophic default that could drag down other eurozone countries and affect the entire global economy.

European leaders in October agreed on a second rescue deal worth euro130 billion (\$171 billion), with key details still being negotiated. Part of the deal includes provisions to write off 50 percent of the value of Greek bonds held

by private creditors, potentially cutting the country's overall debt by euro100 billion (\$132 billion).

Thomsen said the IMF has not been asked yet to join in the second rescue package. He would not comment on the bond-swap negotiations still under way, except to say the IMF was hopeful banks would have a "high participation" in the voluntary deal.

In its 161-page report, the IMF said successful efforts to reduce Greece's

national debt to sustainable levels now hinged on "near-universal participation" in that bond swap deal.

If the bond swap deal goes according to plan, it aims to reduce Greece's debt to 120 percent of gross domestic product by 2020. However, if there is low participation by banks and other private creditors, the IMF warned, Greece's debt could stick above 145 percent of GDP in 2020.

Greece's reforms have also been troubled by a lack of broad political

support for the bailout program, Thomsen said. The country has also been rocked over the last year by frequent strikes and demonstrations, some of which have turned into riots.

However, a political crisis led to the appointment last month of an interim coalition government headed by a former European Central Bank governor, Lucas Papademos. With the country's two main political parties, plus a smaller nationalist party, now holding government seats, the situation has improved.

Thomsen and other international debt inspectors are currently in Athens to review Greece's finances. They will meet with the ministers of transport, development and labor on Wednesday, Finance Minister Evangelos Venizelos on Thursday, and Papademos and the finance minister on Friday.

Venizelos on Tuesday discussed ways of kick-starting the country's depressed economy with European officials.

Greece's budget performance has continued to slip with a deep recession unraveling the revenue gains from additional taxes. The central government's deficit from January to November this year widened by 5.1 percent compared to the same period in 2010, reaching euro20.5 billion (\$27 billion) from euro19.5 billion last year, finance ministry preliminary figures showed.

Separately, Greece raised euro1.625 billion (\$2.14 billion) in the sale of 26-week treasury bills at a yield of 4.95 percent, slightly higher than the 4.89 percent interest rate from a similar sale last month.

The world moves on!

Question from more than one person: The 28th of November is past now and we have hired new employees and had to terminate some employees. What should be my main concerns now?

This question could have been asked by an owner, a manager, a human resource officer, or an employee. All have concerns now with how things are going to be different—if at all. Certainly, there will be changes, but change happens every day and—without being cold and uncaring about the effect of change on individuals—the world moves on. We live in a society kept orderly and fairly predictable by law and the law has been effectuated. In a final tribute to the fellow residents, workmates, and friends who will not be moving on with this part of the world—thank you for your contributions and friendship. You have my best wishes for your success wherever the world moves you next.

Moving on in our part of the world—our losses are offset by the skills and potential of those now newly joining your workplace. The challenge exists for all of those mentioned above—owners, managers, HR, and employees—to make the current transition work smoothly and successfully for all concerned. Two months ago in the Sept. 28 article, I discussed the need for change management. That need is just as key now to the future smooth operation and success of our businesses as it was then.

So, what do we do now? A lot of what we are doing now is still waiting for the final actions on the now 11,000-plus CW-1 petitions. If there was a number released for the H-1B petitions filed, I missed it. Things are less uncertain now than before as, at least, workers know who was petitioned or not, and the expectation is that most petitions will be approved. Many of the employees petitioned for H-1B visas are waiting at home for their EADs to be approved. I think most of us in the HR field thought/hoped that they would be allowed to work while the EAD was being processed, but no definite word has been received from USCIS clearly allowing this. This lapse leaves a lot of employers without their professional staff—healthcare specialists, accountants, engineers, and others—without knowing how long it will take to receive the EADs with the volume of processing now taking place. Then there are the Immediate Relatives of U.S. citizens, some of whom were released from positions due to a lack of parole and EAD. So, while things may be somewhat less uncertain than before,

employers, and employees are not out of the cloud yet.

In my previous article I pointed out that companies were going into a period of change that needed to be managed properly to minimize the stress on their employees and the effect on their businesses. That change is still ongoing. The disruption doesn't appear to have been as great as anticipated for the businesses, other than the turmoil of the advertisements and completing the petitions. I don't want to minimize the disruption to the lives of those who lost their jobs and may be leaving, but I'm not going to pursue that in this article. Neither am I going to critique the job vacancy announcements with their exaggerated qualifications. Others are doing that.

This article is about the question "What should my main concerns be now?" Previously, I discussed anticipated change and what should be done. Now, we know fairly certainly what the change will be, so let's look at how we deal with what has happened. Challenges still exist for the employer and their HR staff to properly manage the change. Let's look again at those points:

- Recognize that the change is going to happen and no miracle is going to occur. Nov. 27/28 has come and gone and life and business goes on. Next year is just around the corner and, still, no miracle is expected.

- Determine who the change will affect and to what extent. We now know who was petitioned and can anticipate approvals for most of these beneficiaries. For those who were not petitioned, there is still some uncertainty in their future.

- Communicate the upcoming change to all employees, whether directly or indirectly affected. I didn't see or hear of much communication to employees. The process, in most cases, lacked transparency and most employees were kept in the dark. Will we do it the same way next year.

- Be concerned with the human side of the change and how their employees will be affected. Like the communication, there didn't seem to be a lot of concern given to how either employees or applicants would be affected. Some of the rhetoric became crude and inflammatory.

- Implement the change in a way that minimizes the affect on the employee and the business. Without much knowledge or involvement in what was taking place, most employees were unaffected by the process—little change actually occurred.

HR MATTERS

By **FRANK GIBSON**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Frank L. Gibson, SPHR, GPHR, owner of HR Support, CNMI, a Saipan-based training and consulting firm, has been a resident of the CNMI for more than 15 years. One of the founding members of the CNMI Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management, he has worked both as a line-manager of human resources and in the Human Resource Office.



- Live up to the company's obligation to its affected employees. In the next several months those employees who were not continued will need their employer's help. Also, don't overlook those new employees who will also need the support of their new employers to fit in to the new workplace successfully.

This just completed evolution was a mostly unplanned reaction to a last minute release of the Final Rule. It's a waste of time and energy to ask again why it happened that way. We now know, with some remaining questions, what will be expected next year. Keep in mind that next year, in this respect, is only about eight months away. If I remember correctly, this next year the petitions are expected to be in early enough (60-90 days) so that the renewals are approved prior to the visa expiration dates to avoid being out-of-status. CW-1s may not get the approval to continue working while under process next year. At the same time, the need, both for the good of the community and for compliance with the law, to seek out and consider qualified U.S. workers will still be there. U.S. workers should use these next eight months or so to enhance their skills and qualifications. Employers should consider training programs to assist in this effort and, where openings occur, remember that good faith effort requirement and your signature on that attestation.

What do we do now—take care of our remaining obligations—don't get overly excited over the hype and inflammatory statements coming from all around, inside and out—comply with the laws and don't take advantage of others' desperation—plan for the future—and, trust me, life and our island-world will move on.

Nation

No cellphones, no texting by drivers, US urges

WASHINGTON (AP)—Texting, emailing or chatting on a cellphone while driving is simply too dangerous to be allowed, federal safety investigators declared Tuesday, urging all states to impose total bans except for emergencies.

Inspired by recent deadly crashes—including one in which a teenager sent or received 11 text messages in 11 minutes before an accident—the recommendation would apply even to hands-free devices, a much stricter rule than any current state law.

The unanimous recommendation by the five-member National

Transportation Safety Board would make an exception for devices deemed to aid driver safety such as GPS navigation systems.

A group representing state highway safety offices called the recommendation “a game-changer.”

“States aren’t ready to support a total ban yet, but this may start the discussion,” Jonathan Adkins, a spokesman for the Governors Highway Safety Association, said.

NTSB chairman Deborah Hersman acknowledged the recommendation would be unpopular with many people

and that complying would involve changing what has become ingrained behavior for many Americans.

While the NTSB doesn’t have the power to impose restrictions, its recommendations carry significant weight with federal regulators and congressional and state lawmakers. Another recommendation issued Tuesday urges states to aggressively enforce current bans on text messaging and the use of cellphones and other portable electronic devices while driving.

“We’re not here to win a popularity contest,” she said. “No email, no text, no update, no call

is worth a human life.”

Currently, 35 states and the District of Columbia ban texting while driving, while nine states and D.C. bar hand-held cellphone use. Thirty states ban all cellphone use for beginning drivers. But enforcement is generally not a high priority, and no states ban the use of hands-free devices for all drivers.

A total cellphone ban would be the hardest to accept for many people.

Leila Noelliste, 26, a Chicago blogger and business owner, said being able to talk on the cellphone “when I’m running around town” is important to self-employed people like herself.

“I don’t think they should ban cellphones because I don’t think you’re really distracted when you’re talking, it’s when you’re texting,” she said. When you’re driving and talking, “your eyes

are still on the road.”

The immediate impetus for the recommendation of state bans was a deadly highway pileup near Gray Summit, Mo., last year in which a 19-year-old pickup driver sent and received 11 texts in 11 minutes just before the accident.

NTSB investigators said they are seeing increasing texting, cellphone calls and other distracting behavior by drivers in accidents involving all kinds of transportation. It has become routine to immediately request the preservation of cellphone and texting records when an investigation is begun.

In the past few years the board has investigated a train collision in which the engineer was texting that killed 25 people in Chatsworth, Calif.; a fatal accident on the Delaware River near Philadelphia in which a

tugboat pilot was talking on his cellphone and using a laptop computer, and a Northwest Airlines flight that sped more than 100 miles past its destination because both pilots were working on their laptops.

Last year, a driver was dialing his cellphone when his truck crossed a highway median near Munford, Ind., and collided with a 15-passenger van. Eleven people were killed.

The board said the initial collision in the Missouri accident was caused by the inattention of the pickup driver who was texting a friend about events of the previous night. The pickup, traveling at 55 mph, hit the back of a tractor truck that had slowed for highway construction. The pickup was rear-ended by a school bus that overrode the smaller vehicle. A second school bus rammed into the back of the first bus.



In this Sept. 20, 2011 file photo, a phone is held in a car in Brunswick, Maine. Texting, emailing or chatting on a cellphone while driving is simply too dangerous to be allowed, federal safety investigators declared Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011, urging all states to impose total bans except for emergencies.

Social issues bubbling up in GOP campaign

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)—Mitt Romney is forced to defend his opposition to same-sex marriage. Newt Gingrich endorses a pledge to be faithful to his wife. Rick Perry runs an ad noting he’s against gays serving openly in the military, and abortion may take center stage Wednesday.

Three weeks before Iowa’s leadoff caucuses, cultural issues that have been virtually dormant in this Republican presidential campaign are bursting to the forefront as social conservatives—who make up the core of GOP primary voters and haven’t rallied behind any one contender—search for a candidate who shares their views.

“Everyone knows what Iowans want to hear and they will be willing to say those things,” said the Rev. Brad Cranston of Burlington, who is backing Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann. “But I think it’s important that we examine their records.”

Almost daily now, GOP front-runners Gingrich and Romney are answering for records and backgrounds that

are flawed in the eyes of these voters. And Republicans rivals looking to revive their struggling campaigns—like Perry—are turning ever more to topics that resonate strongly with this powerful segment of their party’s primary electorate in hopes of becoming their preferred candidate.

“There’s something wrong in this country when gays can serve openly in the military but our kids can’t openly celebrate Christmas or pray in school,” Perry, the Texas governor, says in a TV ad blanket-ing Iowa ahead of the state’s Jan. 3 caucuses.

In a column published Tuesday, Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire, the Episcopal Church’s first openly gay bishop, assailed Perry for using gay and lesbian soldiers as “as political cannon fodder for his campaign” in “an attempt to garner conservative Christian votes.”

Abortion opposition will be the issue of the day Wednesday, when Gingrich, Bachmann, Perry and Rick Santorum attend

a screening of Mike Huckabee’s anti-abortion documentary.

Cultural issues like those—typically a driving force in a GOP primary—largely have taken a back seat to the economy this year, among even the most vocal social conservatives. Many have spent the better part of the year that while they want a candidate who firmly shares their beliefs, it’s most important that they find someone who can fix the economy—and defeat President Barack Obama.

A recent New York Times/CBS News poll found that among evangelicals in Iowa, 55 percent said a candidate’s positions on economic issues were most important to them. Only 25 percent said social issues were their top priority. It was even more lopsided among all likely caucus-goers: 71 percent said the economy was issue one and 14 percent cited social concerns.

Today, the two Republicans at the top of polls in Iowa and elsewhere have baggage that makes cultural conservatives skeptical.

Republicans muscle tax cut bill through House

WASHINGTON (AP)—Defiant Republicans pushed legislation through the House Tuesday night that would keep alive Social Security payroll tax cuts for some 160 million Americans at President Barack Obama’s request—but also would require construction of a Canada-to-Texas oil pipeline that has sparked a White House veto threat.

Passage, on a largely party-line vote of 234-193, sent the measure toward its certain demise in the Democratic-controlled Senate, triggering the final partisan showdown of a remarkably quarrelsome year of divided government.

The legislation “extends the payroll tax relief, extends and reforms unemployment insurance and protects Social Security—without job-killing tax hikes,” Republican House Speaker John Boehner declared after the measure had cleared.

Referring to the controversy over the Keystone XL pipeline, he added, “Our bill includes sensible, bipartisan measures to help the private sector create jobs.”

On a long day of finger point-

ing, however, House Democrats accused Republicans of protecting “millionaires and billionaires,” and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., derided the GOP-backed pipeline provision as “ideological candy” for the tea party-set.

After the House vote, the White House urged Congress on in finishing work on extending the tax cuts and jobless aid. Press Secretary Jay Carney issued a statement that didn’t mention the pipeline but renewed Obama’s insistence that the legislation be paid for, at least in part, by “asking the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share” in higher tax levies.

Lawmakers “cannot go on vacation before agreeing to prevent a tax hike on 160 million Americans and extending unemployment insurance,” he said.

Republicans mocked Obama’s objections to their version of the bill.

“Mr. President, we can’t wait,” said House Majority Leader Eric Cantor of Virginia, employing a refrain the White

House often uses to criticize Republicans for failing to take steps to improve an economy struggling to recover from the worst recession in decades.

Voting in favor of the legislation were 224 Republicans and 10 Democrats, while 179 Democrats and 14 Republicans opposed it.

At its core, the measure did include key parts of the jobs program that Obama asked Congress to approve in September.

The Social Security payroll tax cuts approved a year ago to help stimulate the economy would be extended through 2012, avoiding a loss of take-home income for wage-earners. An expiring program of unemployment benefits for the long-term jobless would remain in place, although at reduced levels that the administration said would cut off aid for 3.3 million.

A third major component would avert a threatened 27 percent cut in payments to doctors who treat Medicare patients, a provision Republicans added to appeal to conservatives but one that the White House and Democrats embrace, too.



ACROSS THE NATION

Army vet shot by Vegas police was ill, sought help

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The 43-year-old Gulf War veteran gunned down by Las Vegas police in a weekend parking lot confrontation felt like his life was spiraling out of control and sought help from a veterans advocate days before he was killed. Stanley Lavon Gibson suffered from cancer he blamed on his Army service, faced eviction from his home, and was due for sentencing on an assault charge

after an argument with a Veterans Affairs doctor. He also was taking painkillers, antidepressants and anxiety medications.

After recently having his disability payments reduced, Gibson called the Las Vegas Review-Journal seeking help.

Atheist messages displace CA park nativity scenes

SANTA MONICA, Calif. (AP)—Jesus, Mary, Joseph and the three wise men are being crowded out by atheists. Most of the Christmas nativity scenes

that churches had placed in a Santa Monica coastal park for decades have been displaced by non-religious displays—and the churches are crying conspiracy. The Santa Monica Nativity Scenes Committee, a coalition of 13 churches, and the Santa Monica Police Officers Association, has traditionally claimed 14 of the 21 display spaces, which are vandal-proof, cage-like areas surrounded by chain-link fencing. The coalition displays have featured life-size depictions of the story of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Asia

New laws protect women from abuse in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Azim Mai's husband allegedly threw acid in her face last year after she refused to sell their two boys to a man in Dubai to use as camel racers. The 35-year-old mother of five can no longer find work as a maid because her deeply scarred face scares potential employers.

Acid burnings are among the most horrific crimes against women in Pakistan that are now criminalized in a landmark set of laws passed by the parliament. They stand to protect millions of women from common forms of abuse in a conservative, Muslim country with a terrible history of gender inequality.

Rights activists praised the laws Tuesday while stressing their passage was just the first step, and likely not the hardest one. It could be even more difficult to get Pakistan's corrupt

and inefficient legal system to protect women's rights that many men in this patriarchal society likely oppose.

"This is a big achievement for the women of Pakistan, civil society and the organizations that have been working for more than 30 years to get women friendly bills passed," said Nayyar Shabana Kiyani, who has lobbied for the legislation as part of The Aurat Foundation, a women's rights group. "We can't really get good results until the laws are implemented at the grassroots level," she added.

The two bills containing the new laws, which received final approval from the Senate on Monday, stiffened the punishment for acid attacks and criminalized practices such as marrying off young girls to settle tribal disputes and preventing women from inheriting property.

Mistreatment of women is widespread in Pakistan, a nation of some 175 million where most people are poor, only half the adults can read and extremist ideologies, including the Taliban's, are gaining traction.

In 2010, at least 8,000 acid attacks, forced marriages and other forms of violence against women were reported, according to The Aurat Foundation. Because the group relied mostly on media reports, the figure is likely an undercount.

Women are discriminated against in other ways as well. Pakistan ranked third to last in 2011 in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, only beating Chad and Yemen. The report captures the magnitude of gender-based disparities in things like health and education.

The new laws explicitly criminalized acid attacks and man-

dated that convicted attackers would serve a minimum sentence of 14 years that could extend to life, and pay a minimum fine of about \$11,200.

Other new laws mandate a minimum prison sentence of three years for forcing a woman to marry, including to settle tribal disputes; five years for preventing a woman from inheriting property; and three years for a practice known as "marriage to the Holy Quran."

Feudal families in rural areas of Pakistan engage in this practice so that women won't receive marriage proposals and their share of the inheritance will stay in the family, said Farzana Bari, head of the gender studies department at Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad.

"This legislation addresses the patriarchal traditions that have been used against women to violate their rights," said Bari. "People have been doing these kinds of things for so long that they don't even think it's unjust. Past bills aimed at protecting women have met resistance from Islamists and other conservatives in parliament. But the latest measures were passed unanimously by both the Senate and the National Assembly and will go into effect once the president signs them.

Mai, the acid attack victim who also has three daughters, was happy with the passage of the laws but favored even harsher punishment, including for her husband, who she said was in jail awaiting trial. It was unclear

whether the new laws would affect her husband's case, since the alleged crime occurred before their passage.

The couple was living in Rahim Yar Khan, a very conservative city in Punjab province, when he attacked her for refusing to sell their children, she said. Many South Asian children have been trafficked to the Gulf to work as camel racers.

"I lost my job, I lost my face, and I have been facing hunger and poverty," Mai said during an interview at the offices of the Acid Survivors Foundation, a charity in Islamabad treating acid attack victims. "I am happy over the passage of this bill, but I will only be satisfied when authorities throw acid in the face of my husband."

China urges better safety after school bus deaths

BEIJING (AP)—China's safety regulator is demanding immediate action to improve safety aboard frequently overloaded and badly maintained school buses following a string of accidents that have killed at least 36 children and two adults.

The remarks Tuesday came hours after a school bus accident in eastern China killed 15 children, highlighting continuing safety problems in the country's school transport system. New reports have emerged that the bus was overloaded with passengers.

Managers need to identify and correct problems now instead of waiting for the passage of new regulations and safety standards, State Administration of Work Safety spokesman Huang Yi was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

School buses need to be sturdier and better maintained than ordinary buses, and those that fail the test must be barred from the roads, Huang said.

Education Minister Yuan Guiren, meanwhile, ordered reviews of school safety policies and immediate checks on all 285,000 school buses in the country, only 10 percent of which meet technical standards issued last year, the official China Daily newspaper reported.

On Monday evening, a school bus taking primary students home slipped off a country road into an irrigation ditch in the eastern province of Jiangsu, killing 15 children. The accident followed a similar tragedy last month.

In Monday's incident, workers at a nearby factory heard cries for help and rushed to the overturned bus, broke open the

windows and began pulling children out.

Eight other children were injured in the accident, one of them seriously, said a spokesman for the Jiangsu provincial government, who like many Chinese officials refused to give his name. The bus was carrying 29 students and was designed for 52 people, so it was not overloaded, Xinhua said.

Other reports, however, cited rescuers and surviving students as saying the bus was severely overloaded.

The Beijing News tabloid quoted 12-year-old Li Kailong as saying there were about 70 people on board when it left the school, with only two getting off prior to the crash. Villager Zhang Yunhe, who helped in the rescue, was also quoted as saying there were "definitely over 60 children in the bus."

Associate: Pakistan president had 'mini-stroke'

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari suffered a "mini-stroke" that led to his extended hospitalization in Dubai, but he is improving quickly and will return to his country within two weeks, a close associate and a government spokesman said Tuesday. Zardari's health has been the subject of speculation and contradictory statements by government officials since he was rushed to Dubai last week. His trip triggered rumors he could be on the verge of resigning. Officials deny that. The president's absence coincided with domestic political attacks against him over a memo delivered to U.S. officials asking Washington's help in reining in Pakistan's powerful military.

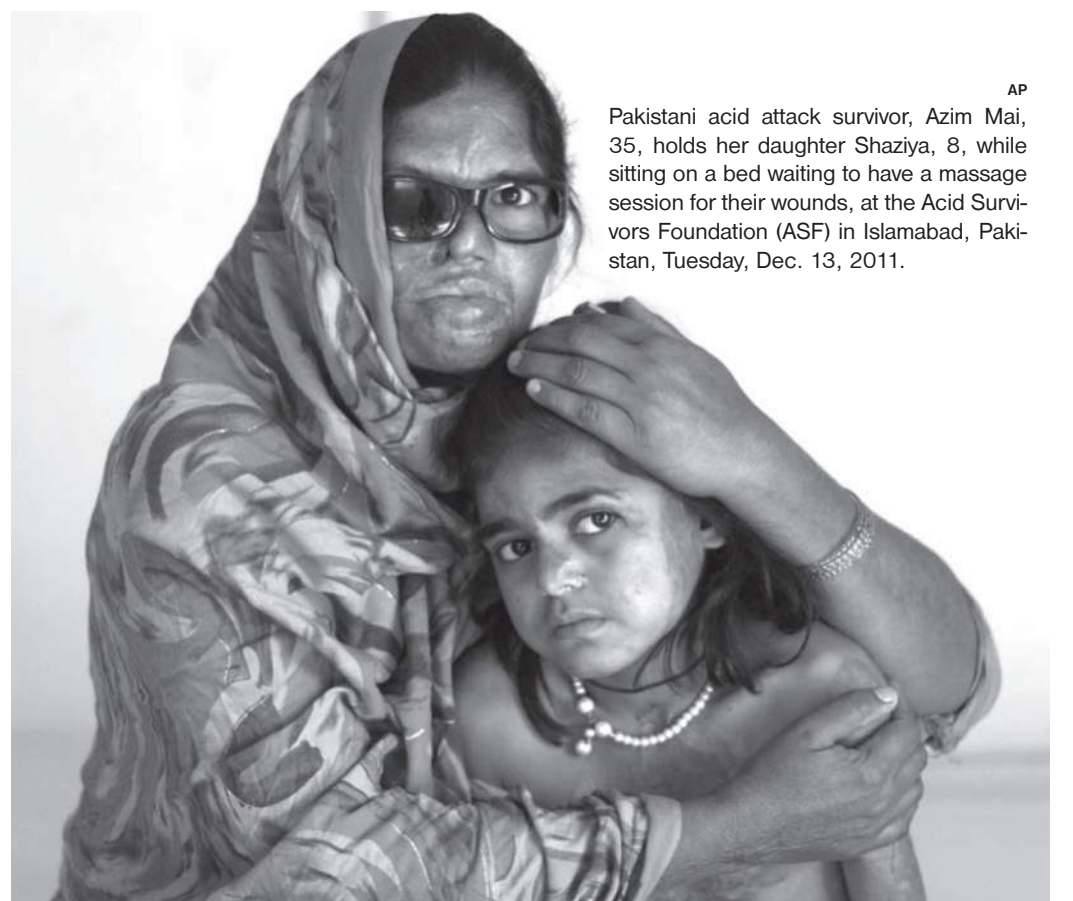
Suu Kyi's party gets OK to register in Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar's government has approved opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party to register for a coming by-election, state media said Tuesday, formally returning the pro-democracy group to the political arena. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy decided last month to rejoin politics in the

military-dominated country after recent reforms by the nominally civilian administration that took power this year. The party boycotted last year's general elections because of restrictive rules that, among other things, prevented Suu Kyi from being a candidate. The government has since lifted many of those restrictions.

'Unfit' Khmer Rouge defendant to stay detained

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Cambodia's U.N.-assisted tribunal ordered Tuesday that a Khmer Rouge defendant earlier ruled unfit to stand trial will remain detained to see if her mental condition improves. The highest chamber of the tribunal reversed a ruling by junior judges that would have freed 79-year-old Ieng Thirith whose doctors concluded has Alzheimer's disease. The lower panel had said the illness diminished her mental capacity. Prosecutors had appealed against her release. The new ruling came during the second week of testimony in the trial of Ieng Thirith's three co-defendants, who include her husband, Ieng Sary, foreign minister in the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge regime. Ieng Thirith was social affairs minister.



AP
Pakistani acid attack survivor, Azim Mai, 35, holds her daughter Shaziya, 8, while sitting on a bed waiting to have a massage session for their wounds, at the Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF) in Islamabad, Pakistan, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011.

PH police arrest former top poll official

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Police arrested the Philippines' former elections chairman Tuesday on charges he aided the vote fraud allegedly ordered by former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Former Elections Chairman Benjamin Abalos surrendered to a Manila regional trial court in suburban Pasay city and was placed under arrest, police Supt. Samuel Turla said. He will be held in a police detention facility, unlike Arroyo, who is under arrest in a government hospital.

Police took his fingerprints and mugshots before detaining Abalos at a regional police headquarters in the capital, Turla said.

Abalos said he surrendered to underscore his innocence to charges that he played a role in rigging 2007 senatorial elections to ensure the victory of Arroyo's candidates in a Muslim autonomous region then gov-

erned by her political ally.

President Benigno Aquino III succeeded Arroyo last year after a landslide election victory due in part to his promise to fight corruption and crushing poverty. He has blamed Arroyo for a decade of scandals that eroded public trust in government and held back foreign investment.

Arroyo, 64, has denied any wrongdoing and accused her successor of using "black propaganda" to damage her image. She was arrested last month at a private hospital and later was moved to a public veterans' hospital amid calls for her to be treated like other crime suspects.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa, who arrived in Manila Tuesday for talks with Aquino and his counterpart, Albert del Rosario, said that by strongly dealing with past cases of corruption, countries like the Philippines would discourage

future cases of graft.

"You can only deter future possible acts of corruption if you're seen to be robust in dealing with the past," Natalegawa said in a news conference, adding he was glad that the Philippines, like his country, was taking steps to root out graft.

On Monday, Aquino's allies in the House of Representatives impeached Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona on eight complaints of alleged corruption and that court he led improperly favored Arroyo. She appointed him chief justice shortly before her presidential term ended last year.

Corona vowed to fight back. Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile said Corona is likely to face trial there in January after Congress returns from a month-long Christmas break.

Aquino thanked lawmakers Tuesday for impeaching Corona.

World

Attack in Belgian city leaves 5 dead, 122 wounded

LIEGE, Belgium (AP)—Summoned for questioning by Belgian police, a man with a history of weapons and drug offenses left home armed with hand grenades, a revolver and an assault rifle. Stopping at a central square filled with holiday shoppers, he lobbed three grenades into the crowd, then opened fire.

Four people were killed, including an 18-month-old toddler, and 122 were wounded in the assault Tuesday that brought tragedy to the pre-Christmas season of students reveling in exam results and preschoolers enchanted by brightly lit trees and holiday stalls.

Authorities said the shooter also died, but they were at a loss to explain the reason for the onslaught. The prime minister said it was not related to terrorism.

In a second burst of deadly violence in Western Europe on Tuesday—attacks rare for the continent—a man shot and killed two Senegalese vendors at a market in Italy.

The midday attack in the eastern Belgian city of Liege sent hundreds of panicked shoppers stampeding down the cobbled streets of the old city, fleeing explosions and bullets.

Belgian authorities identified the shooter as Nordine Amrani, a 33-year-old Liege resident who had done jail time for offenses involving guns and drugs, and had been called in for questioning Tuesday in a sexual abuse case.

Officials said Amrani left his home with a backpack, armed with hand grenades, a revolver and an FAL assault rifle. He walked alone to the busy Place Saint-Lambert, the central entry point to downtown shopping streets, then climbed onto an overpass that gave him an ideal view of the square, which was bedecked with a huge Christmas tree and



In this image taken from video, injured people are treated by members of the public, as they lay injured in the moments immediately following a grenade attack in the city center of Liege, Belgium, Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011.



crowded with shoppers.

From there, Amrani lobbed three hand grenades toward a central bus stop, which serves 1,800 buses a day, and opened fire. The explosions sent shards

of glass from the bus shelter across a wide area.

"I heard a loud boom," said Dimitri Degryse, who was driving near the square. "I thought it was something on my car that was broken or something. Then a few seconds after a second boom, and I saw all the glass breaking. I saw people running, screaming."

Hundreds fled the square as well as a nearby

Christmas market. Video showed people, including a large group of preschoolers, rushing to seek cover, some still carrying shopping bags.

Amrani died at the scene,

but Liege Prosecutor Danielle Reynders told reporters he was not killed by police. It was unclear if he committed suicide or died by accident, though he still had a number of grenades with him.

Those killed were two boys ages 15 and 17, a 75-year-old woman, and an 18-month-old toddler who died Tuesday evening in the hospital, Liege police said.

As police hunted for possible accomplices, residents were ordered to stay in their homes or seek shelter in shops or public buildings. Sirens blared and a police chopper roared overhead, and a medical post was set up in the nearby courtyard of the Prince Bishops courthouse. Dozens of emergency vehicles took victims away for treatment.

Police closed off the area but found no accomplices, and calm returned a few hours later.

The Place Saint-Lambert and the nearby Place du Marche host

Liege's annual Christmas market, which features 200 shops and attracts some 1.5 million visitors a year. A nearby Ferris wheel is also a central attraction.

By dusk, with the Christmas lights gleaming again, King Albert II and Queen Paola came to pay their respects, as did Prime Minister Elio Di Rupo.

Di Rupo stressed the attack was the act of a lone assailant, a man known to police who had no links to terrorism. "The whole country shares in the pain. This is an isolated case. This is not about terrorism," he said.

Herman Van Rompuy, a former Belgian prime minister who is now president of the European Council, said he was badly shaken by the attack.

"There is no explanation whatsoever," Van Rompuy said. "It leaves me perplexed and shocked."

While such attacks are unusual in Western Europe, the continent has not been immune to such violence.

There was another deadly shooting Tuesday in Italy, where a man opened fire in an outdoor market in Florence, killing two vendors from Senegal and wounding three other Senegalese before killing himself, authorities said.

Investigators identified the attacker as 50-year-old Gianluca Casseri, and RAI state TV said he was known to police for having participated in racist marches by an extreme right-wing group.

In Norway last July, far-right extremist Anders Behring Breivik went on a bomb and shooting spree that killed 77 people in Oslo and an island retreat, apparently motivated by a hatred of Muslim immigrants and a deep grudge against the governing Labor Party.

Mexican worshippers underwhelmed by papal visit

MEXICO CITY (AP)—In a country at least nominally 90 percent Catholic, you would think the news of another papal visit would be met with jubilation.

It's not that the millions of faithful in Mexico aren't happy about Pope Benedict XVI's upcoming visit, expected before Easter next year.

It's just that they can't drum up the same kind of emotion they had for his predecessor, the late Pope John Paul II, a man so beloved that the Vatican was presenting his relics, a vial of blood and a wax likeness, in more than 100 locations throughout the country.

John Paul visited Mexico five times, drawing millions of worshippers each time. The Latin American nation has the second-highest number of Catholics in the world behind Brazil, and was John Paul's third-most-visited country after Poland and France.

The pope spoke Spanish when he came here, endearing him even more to Mexicans who still buy up large quantities of photo frames, stamps, rosaries and mugs bearing his name and image. The pope died in 2005 at the age of 84. In May he was beatified, the last formal step before possible sainthood.

There are no Benedict-related items for sale here.

"That Holiness is not very commercial," explained Jorge Sanchez, a 30-year-old vendor.

Benedict confirmed his travel plans Monday during a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica honoring Mexico's patron saint, the Virgin of Guadalupe.

WORLD BRIEFS

Gunman kills 2 in market in Florence

ROME (AP)—An Italian man with extreme right-wing views opened fire in an outdoor market in Florence Tuesday, killing two vendors from Senegal, then critically wounded three other Senegalese immigrants in another Florence market before killing himself, authorities said. Florence prosecutor Giuseppe Quattrocchi said the man shot himself in the head in an underground parking lot under the covered market of San Lorenzo, in the heart of the Tuscan capital, as police were approaching him. Investigators identified the attacker as 50-year-old Gianluca Casseri. RAI state TV said he was known to police for having participated in racist marches by an extreme right-wing group. It said he used a .357 Magnum revolver.

Mexico says captured cartel leader had arsenal

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexican authorities said Tuesday that an alleged founder of the Zetas drug cartel had an arsenal of 169 weapons when he was captured Monday, and may have been linked to the abduction of nine Mexican marines. Navy spokesman Jose Luis Vergara said suspect Raul Lucio Hernandez Lechuga oversaw Zetas operations around the Gulf coast state of Veracruz, where nine marines disappeared earlier this year. Vergara said a suspect was killed and a marine wounded in a firefight that erupted during Hernandez Lechuga's capture Monday in the Veracruz state city of Cordoba. The bust was the result of a yearlong intelligence operation, Vergara said.

US-born Syrian blogger faces criminal charges

BEIRUT (AP)—Syrian authorities have charged a U.S.-born Syrian blogger with trying to incite sectarian strife, activists said Tuesday, while regime forces fired on a funeral procession in a restive northwestern region, capping a bloody day of attacks that left at least 28 people dead.

Razan Ghazzawi is the latest among dozens of activists, journalists and bloggers who have been detained since the revolt against President Bashar Assad began nine months ago, triggering a brutal crackdown that the U.N. estimates has now killed more than 5,000 people and put thousands into security lockups.

Ghazzawi, 31, had been documenting human rights abuses in recent months, and was arrested Dec. 4 at the border while on her way to Jordan for a conference on press freedoms.

On Monday, she was charged

by Syrian authorities with trying to incite sectarian strife, spreading false information and weakening national sentiment—a charge often leveled against those who challenge the Syrian regime, according to rights activists. The charges could carry a prison sentence of up to 15 years.

The Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression in the Arab World where Ghazzawi worked said in a statement Tuesday that Ghazzawi denied all the charges.

"We demand the immediate and unconditional release of our colleague Razan Ghazzawi as well as an end to her trial and the annulment of the completely baseless charges against her," the SCM said.

Despite growing international pressure on his regime, Assad has forged ahead with his crackdown, unleashing

security forces and the army on cities in a bid to crush an uprising inspired by similar revolts across the Arab world.

On Tuesday, regime forces fired on thousands of people taking part in a funeral procession in the northern city of Idlib, killing two people and pushing the day's death toll to at least 28.

The flare-up of violence near the Turkish border is fresh evidence that the Syrian uprising is growing into a full fledged insurgency.

Military defectors known as the Free Syrian Army have recently been fighting back with increasingly sophisticated attacks, giving many protesters hope of a fighting chance against Assad's fiercely loyal forces, but also complicating an uprising that was once largely peaceful.

The defectors have found

shelter in cities and villages among sympathetic Syrians, their presence giving the regime a pretext to crack down even more strongly than before. Authorities have also used the attacks by defectors to support their official narrative that the unrest in Syria is the work of armed gangs and terrorists, not true reform seekers.

The U.S., EU and the Arab League have imposed economic sanctions on Syria, and Washington and its Western allies are pushing for U.N. sanctions as well on Assad's regime.

Russia and China—two veto-wielding countries on the U.N. Security Council—have resisted the idea, and on Tuesday Russia's foreign minister accused the West of taking an "immoral" stance on Syria and ignoring violence by the Syrian opposition.

Focus

Wallets are opening up this holiday season.

Some of that spending will be rewarding, but some will lead to a debt hangover in 2012. Pausing to develop a spending plan can help limit impulsive credit card purchases and set your priorities for the coming year.

With that in mind, these 12 ways to spend \$1,200 in 2012 offer a mix of the practical and the indulgent. Even if you don't have that much, the tips may give you some ideas on how to get the most from your money to help you and others.

1. INVEST IN YOUR CAREER.

Take steps to jump-start your career: Pursue a professional certification, sign up for a college course, get proactive about a job search.

Thinking about changing fields? Start with four hours of private coaching at \$125 an hour to get an assessment, customized resume, targeted cover letter and a plan for your search. Then get group coaching to help brainstorm strategy. The Five O'Clock Club, a national career counseling and outplacement company, charges \$380 for 10 weeks of coaching sessions by teleconference. Spend the remaining \$320 on networking lunches and new clothes so you look sharp and feel confident.

You probably need the outside help. Only 3 percent of jobs are filled through

12 smart ways to spend \$1,200 in 2012

By **DAVE CARPENTER**
AP Personal Finance Writer

search firms and 3 percent through ads, says Kate Wendleton, Five O'Clock's president.

2. GEAR UP WITH A NEW COMPUTER.

Dying for a razor-thin MacBook laptop? A \$1,200 budget allows room only for the 11.6-inch MacBook Air (\$1,000); the mid-range, 13.3-inch version runs \$1,300. If a larger screen is essential, try one of the 13-inch Sony S Series laptops, with list prices starting at \$800.

Also consider if a tablet would work for you. Apple Inc.'s iPad 2, with a 9.7-inch screen, sells for as low as \$499. Word is the next-generation iPad 3 will be released early next year. Another iPad rival is rolling out this

month—a new 10-inch tablet called the Asys Eee Pad Transformer Prime, also for \$499.

At those prices, you could buy a tablet and a laptop for less than \$1,200. The HP Pavilion g7, with a 17.3-inch screen, is a Consumer Reports Best Buy at \$570.

3. SUPPORT A CANDIDATE OR CAUSE.

Change only comes about through involvement. Consider supporting candidates and issues you're passionate about in the coming election year.

You may not be in position to donate \$1,200, but that amount falls easily within the allowable limits. An individual is allowed to give a maximum \$2,500 per election to a candidate for federal office, or \$5,000 per year to a political action committee that supports federal candidates. State laws vary. Political contributions are not tax-deductible.

4. INVEST IN A LOW-RISK MUTUAL FUND.

You can reduce your portfolio's exposure to stock market volatility.

The Standard & Poor's Low Volatility index holds the 100 stocks in the S&P 500 that have had the lowest volatility over the past 12 months. Those high-quality, dividend-paying stocks historically have performed about as well as the overall market. Tap into this strategy through the PowerShares S&P 500 Low Volatility exchange-traded fund (SPLV), recommends Jack Ablin, chief investment officer at Harris Private Bank.

Also consider one of the handful of no-load mutual funds with a \$1,000 required minimum investment and a gold-medal rating from Morningstar. Try FMI Large Cap (FMIHX) for a focus on large U.S. companies or Oakmark Global I (OAKGX) for international exposure.

5. TRAIN YOUR INNER OLYMPIC ATHLETE.

Make the July start of the London Summer Olympics your deadline to get in shape or tackle an interna-

tional challenge.

Join a gym that fits your budget. Take swim lessons at the Y. Get ready for your own track and field event, such as a local 5K race. Buy a pair of walking or running shoes made in the USA; New Balance specializes in them: <http://www.newbalance.com>.

If "faster, higher, stronger" doesn't resonate as your personal motto, \$1,200 should buy a round-trip plane ticket to London or elsewhere during the Olympics. If you can't afford the rest of the journey, take a foreign language class—maybe Russian, to get ready for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

6. MAKE A FEEL-GOOD INVESTMENT.

Lend money to a fisherman in Cambodia, a beautician in Turkey or a dairy farmer in Colombia through micro-financing—small loans to impoverished entrepreneurs in developing countries or the U.S. The loans are as small as \$25 at Kiva, a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco. You could split up the \$1,200 in any number of ways among the would-be borrowers shown at <http://www.kiva.org>. Lenders get email updates on the projects as their money is repaid.

Or lend to any of more than 75 nonprofit and socially responsible organizations through RSF Social Finance's Social Investment Fund, <http://rsfsocial-finance.org>. The minimum investment is \$1,000, but lenders get a 1 percent return and the San Francisco-based fund claims a 100 percent repayment rate.

7. PREPARE FOR MOTHER NATURE.

This year was a record-breaker with a dozen billion-dollar weather disasters, including devastating droughts and wildfires; 19 tropical storms; and Hurricane Irene, which caused more than \$73 billion in losses. If 2012 is as bad or worse, are you prepared?

Consider buying a portable generator, which can cost more than \$1,000 depending on power and features. Larger "standby" generators that run on propane or natural gas cost more.

Homeowners with basements should have a sump pump, which will cost about \$150 or more. The rest of the \$1,200 can be used to stock up on supplies. You can put together your own disaster supply kit with guidance from the National Hurricane Center, <http://www.nhc.noaa.gov>, or buy one on Amazon for \$100 or more.

8. HELP YOUR COMMUNITY.

You could play Santa Claus all year round by giving to local organizations you know or are personally involved with. An added plus is that you may be able to get a better sense of how your money is making an impact.

Screen any organizations through GuideStar.org, CharityNavigator.org and the Better Business Bureau.

9. SUPPORT THE ARTS.

See live theater, concerts, dance.

The amount could be spent in one fell swoop—on a trip to see Broadway shows or on subscriptions to a top-tier arts organization. For less than \$1,200, you can get at least two season tickets to most theater companies, operas and symphonies. Broadway Across America, <http://www.broadwayacrossamerica.com>, brings the best of Broadway to 40 U.S. cities.

Or spend it on big-time concerts. After watching Madonna during Super Bowl halftime, maybe you'll want to shell out to see her 2012 tour.

10. GET BOOKISH FOR RELAXATION AND PROFIT.

A basic e-reader like the Nook Simple Touch from Barnes & Noble costs only \$99 and can load books from libraries and other bookstores.

That leaves more than \$1,000 to spend on books for you and as gifts. Buying hardcover versions of all of The New York Times' "100 Notable Books of 2011" at list prices would run you \$2,915.97 plus sales taxes, so that's out. But you can easily pamper yourself with a book a month, choosing titles like Chad Harbach's heralded debut novel "The Art of Fielding" (\$25.99), Charles Shield's Kurt Vonnegut biography "And So It Goes" (\$30) and Erik Larson's "In the Garden of Beasts" (\$26). The e-versions sell for less than half those amounts.

If you set up a reading fund, put the balance in a high-yielding online bank account. Throughout the year, buy some classic investing books, such as "The Intelligent Investor," by Benjamin Graham and "A Random Walk Down Wall Street," by Burton Malkiel, and invest with your knowledge at year's end.

11. FUND DATE NIGHTS FOR A YEAR.

Strengthen a relationship with a year's worth of date nights with a spouse or special someone.

Stepping out once a week could be a stretch for just \$23, but you could do it with a little creativity. Think movie tickets, museums, a bottle of wine to share in the park. Or 12 \$100 nights out could be a lot of fun too.

12. PREPARE FOR THE END.

Even if you chuckle at the Mayan prophecy that the end of the world or some other calamity will occur in late 2012, let it be a reminder to take some steps to prepare for your own eventual passing.

Long before retirement, everyone should have an estate plan with a will, beneficiaries for all accounts, a durable power of attorney, a health-care proxy or living will, and possibly trusts for any minor children. And those over 65 should also discuss long-term strategies with an adviser, while they're still able.

An investment of \$1,200 toward an estate plan can go a long way toward protecting your estate and minimizing potential expenses and hassles for your heirs.



Environment

Protecting nature makes sense, says study »IUCN and Rio Tinto assess conservation's costs and benefits



RIO TINTO

The Tsitongambarika forest in Madagascar is the largest expanse of lowland humid forest in southern Madagascar and contains high levels of biodiversity, with more than 80 percent of species found nowhere else on earth.

GLAND, Switzerland—A new study by the International Union for Conservation of Nature or IUCN finds that by financing the restoration or protection of natural areas, companies can offset the negative impacts of their operations and generate significant economic benefits, but the needs of local communities must be properly addressed.

“Companies are increasingly interested in how to minimize and compensate for the negative impacts of their development projects,” said Nathalie Olsen of IUCN’s Economics Program and lead author of the report. “Information about distribution of costs and benefits of conservation action, such as who gains and who loses, is essential to know who should be compensated, by whom, and by how much.”

Rio Tinto recently commissioned IUCN to estimate the monetary value of the biodiversity benefits of conserving the Tsitongambarika forest in Madagascar and examine the costs of such conservation.

The company, in collaboration with

some of its biodiversity partners, is exploring conservation opportunities to compensate for the unavoidable residual impacts of its mining operations in the region. It supports local non-governmental organizations and communities in conserving parts of the Tsitongambarika forest, to produce the conservation gains needed to achieve a net positive impact on biodiversity for this operation.

“There are many types of values associated with biodiversity and the services provided by tropical forests, such as food, wildlife habitat and carbon storage,” said Dennis Hosack of IUCN’s Business and Biodiversity Program. “Some of these values can be quantified and expressed in monetary terms, which allows them to be better integrated into decision-making by both companies and governments.”

“For example, we have found that global economic benefits of conserving the Tsitongambarika forest are worth at least US\$17.3 million over 30 years, mainly due to climate regulating functions,” said Olsen. “When deciding whether to

restore or protect land, demonstrating the positive economic values of nature and the benefits to people, makes conservation a more competitive option.”

The Tsitongambarika forest is the largest expanse of lowland humid forest in southern Madagascar and contains high levels of biodiversity, with more than 80 percent of species found nowhere else on earth. It is while also an important source of local livelihoods. The forest is being lost at a rate of 1-2 percent per year, mainly due to slash and burn cultivation by local communities.

To assess the benefits of conserving the forest, IUCN took into account the value of wildlife habitat, hydrological regulation and carbon storage. It also examined the costs of conservation, such as up-front investment, the maintenance of protected areas, as well as the opportunity costs that local people bear if they lose access to natural resources that have traditionally provided them with food and income.

The study found that while substantial economic benefits associated with the

conservation of tropical forests accrue to global populations, it is often local people who bear most of the costs of conservation action and need to be compensated for the losses they incur. This can be achieved through Payments for Ecosystem Services, which provide incentives for local communities to protect or sustainably manage land. Another opportunity to recognize this value is through the UN program Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), considering local needs and the objectives of national strategies.

“Although the study focuses on southern Madagascar, its findings can be applied to conservation actions globally and are relevant for many companies as they increasingly aim to compensate for their negative impacts on biodiversity,” added Hosack.

The report, “Exploring ecosystem valuation to move toward net positive impacts on biodiversity in the mining sector,” can be downloaded at <http://www.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2011-062.pdf>. (IUCN)

Birding community is atwitter over rare sighting

By STEVE CHAWKINS
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Hark, the red-flanked bluetail sings!

Yes, that red-flanked bluetail—the bird species that until this week had been spotted just once in North America outside of Alaska.

Avid birders have been vocalizing like crazy about the discovery, which was made Tuesday by biologists on San Clemente Island, a 21-mile-long sliver off the Southern California coast.

“Birders get very excited about this kind of thing,” said Kimball Garrett, ornithology collections manager at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. “It just illustrates that almost anything can happen out there in the wild with birds.”

The small, thrush-like bird normally breeds in a wide area spanning Northern Europe and Northern Asia and winters mainly in Southeast Asia.



A few red-flanked bluetails have been spotted in the neighborhood of the Aleutians, but the species' only other

North American engagement was 22 years ago on Southeast Farallon Island, a rocky chunk off San Francisco.

This week, researchers from the Institute for Wildlife Studies were trekking through the canyons of uninhabited San Clemente, checking on the San Clemente loggerhead shrike. The island is owned by the U.S. Navy, which is trying to aid the endangered bird's recovery.

Jethro Runco, a member of the institute's San Clemente team, wrote on the birding website eBird.org about coming across a bird he'd never seen—an avian he thought just might be a Siberian rubythroat.

“We followed the bird for roughly 30 minutes—30 minutes of sheer pleasure, minds racing and hearts pumping!” he wrote. He took plenty of point-and-shoot photos and tried seven or eight times to radio his colleagues.

Back at the office, the shrike project's supervisor, Justyn Stahl, was brushing his teeth when a grinning Runco

showed him the photos.

“I threw my toothbrush on the counter and ran to my room to grab my copy of ‘Birds of East Asia,’” Runco wrote on eBird, “vaguely recalling seeing this bird during a trip to Thailand.”

Stahl, Runco and a few others raced back to the canyon. The light was fading. All they found were a couple of orange-crowned warblers—but then they saw a tiny bird with “the beautiful blue rump and tail, the cinnamon wings, the reddish flanks ...

“As the sun set and the light faded,” Stahl wrote, “we hiked back out to the truck, delirious.”

How what birders call a “vagrant” wound up so far off course is unknown—but it's hardly unprecedented, according to Garrett of the natural history museum.

“Not all individuals unerringly migrate from point A to point B,” he said. “The astounding thing is that so many birds get it right.”

DO YOUR PART

Give waste-free gifts

By TERRI BENNETT
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

You know what I don't want this year? More stuff. I don't want to give stuff that won't be used, receive stuff that won't be used, or be surrounded by stuff that won't be used. Remember the George Carlin bit about “stuff”? In one of his classic stand up routines he said, “A house is just a place to keep your stuff while you go out and get more stuff.” This year I'm going to do my part and give gifts that don't come with all that extra stuff!

When it comes to my family, I like to give the gift of an experience. This year, we'll be on a family vacation during the holidays while we also celebrate my son's graduation from college. It's a trip I've been planning for more than a year and it's one that is filled with different outings and adventures. No gift wrap needed! Obviously, this is not something we can do every year but there are other experiences that would make a memorable holiday gift for younger kids. It can be horseback riding lessons, tickets to a play, or day at your local museum. I even know of a mother who gave her young daughter the ultimate (and free!) gift. It was the daughter's first email address!

There are plenty of waste-free options for teenagers. Gift certificates for a manicure, online music stores, or a night at the movies will always be welcome and come without all that gift-wrap. A personalized booklet with coupons for getting out of chores, eating out, or staying up late, are also creative and popular gifts for young adults.

For the bigger kids on the list—such as our spouses—there are plenty of thoughtful, waste-free ideas for them too. A gift of a night out on the town, a day of pampering at a local spa, a house cleaning gift certificate, or tickets to a sporting event or concert are smart ideas that come without the clutter.

If you do opt for a more traditional gift—do it with a twist. For instance, if you're giving the gift of jewelry, consider an estate piece or a vintage item. You can also find all sorts of unique pieces exquisitely crafted from recycled materials. You can find necklaces, earrings, and bracelets made from all sorts of reused materials—everything from recycled glass to recycled silver.

Not every gift needs to be big to make a big impact. Do Your Part this year and give greener gifts. These are the gifts memories are made from and they won't add to the amount of stuff you already have around your home. Consider it a gift to you and the planet.

Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, author, and founder of DoYourPart, everyday green living ideas that are better for you and the planet. Send questions to terri@doyourpart.com and follow DoYourPart on Facebook and Twitter.

Life & Style

Vets upset with 'Hawaii Five-O' crew at cemetery

HONOLULU (AP)—A group of Pearl Harbor survivors say they were disrespected by the crew of the CBS crime drama "Hawaii Five-O" during a visit to Honolulu's National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

The Denver-based Greatest Generations Foundation took 23 veterans to the Punchbowl cemetery last week to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor. The veterans found it offensive that the crew members didn't stop production while the national anthem and taps were played and that they were walking on graves, said Steffan Tubbs, a foundation board

member and co-host of KOA-AM's morning news show in Denver.

Tubbs visited the cemetery with the group, which conducted a small ceremony there.

The crew was filming a scene involving a lead character visiting his father's grave, "which in reality was surrounded by the real graves of WWII heroes," Tubbs said Tuesday. "It didn't seem right."

Cemetery Director Gene Castagnetti said the filming was approved beforehand. He added walking on graves is unavoidable and not considered disrespectful if done carefully.

It came as a surprise that the veterans would be

laying roses during their ceremony, taking them to locations in the cemetery where the crew was filming, Castagnetti told the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

While payment is not required for filming at the cemetery, "Hawaii Five-O" donated \$1,000, KHON-TV reported. The show has filmed there several times previously.

"We were surprised to hear this report and are looking into the matter," CBS said in a statement. "Our veterans deserve the highest level of respect and reverence for their service, particularly during a ceremony honoring those who paid the ultimate sacrifice."

The show's executive producer Peter Lenkov apologized in a statement Tuesday, saying that the crew is made up of mostly locals, many with military ties, and that the series "carries a demonstrative pro-military message."

"On behalf of the Hawaii Five-O production unit, we'd like to apologize to any veterans and members of the Greatest Generation Foundation whom we unintentionally offended when our events coincided," he said. "Contrary to some reports, to show respect, our crew did cease production for the playing of the national anthem, taps and for the remainder of the ceremony."

Taylor's ring from Burton fetches \$8.8M in NY

NEW YORK (AP)—A diamond ring given to Elizabeth Taylor by actor Richard Burton sold for over \$8.8 million at auction in New York.

The 33.19-carat ring was part of Christie's sale of jewelry and other items from the collection of the late actress, who starred in "National Velvet" and "Cleopatra." Christie's says a private buyer from Asia purchased the ring, which was estimated to sell for \$2.5 to \$3.5 million.

A diamond bracelet given to the actress by Michael Jackson sold for over \$194,000. Its estimated sale price was \$30,000 to \$50,000. Prices include the buyer's premium.

Other sales of Taylor's art, clothing and memorabilia will be held later in the week. An online-only sale of some items runs until Saturday.

Taylor died in Los Angeles in March at age 79.



AP
In this Sept. 23, 2011 file photo, a woman displays "The Elizabeth Taylor Diamond," a 33.19 carat ring, which was a gift from Richard Burton, and worn by the actress during a press preview of Taylor's possessions at Christie's London.

Jackson doctor seeks court-paid lawyer for appeal

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The doctor convicted of killing Michael Jackson asked a court Tuesday to appoint a publicly funded attorney to handle his appeal because he cannot afford to hire counsel.

Dr. Conrad Murray filed an amended notice of appeal stating he is indigent and unable to pay for an appellate lawyer to try to overturn his involuntary manslaughter conviction.

The 58-year-old cardiologist intends to argue his case before the California 2nd District Court of Appeal, based in Los Angeles.

Murray's filing states that a court-appointed attorney would decide how to frame the ap-



Court has ruled that felony convicts have a constitutional right to assistance of counsel.

A jury convicted Murray last month in Jackson's June 2009 death. Murray is expected to serve roughly two years in jail, half of the four-year sentence that Superior Court Judge Michael Pastor handed down on Nov. 29.

peal after reviewing transcripts and rulings from the case.

The U.S. Supreme

Murray's had sought to present evidence to jurors about Jackson's finances, details of his deal for a series of comeback concerts, and information about other doctors treating the pop superstar. But the judge refused and stated the trial would be about Murray's care of the singer.

The Houston-based doctor had been giving Jackson nightly doses of the powerful anesthetic propofol as a sleep aid. The drug is normally given in hospital settings with extensive monitoring equipment, but testimony showed Murray had only basic equipment and left Jackson's bedside on the morning of his death.

Finalists announced for young adult writers prize

NEW YORK (AP)—Five debut novels are finalists for the American Library Association's William C. Morris award for young adult writers who have never published before.

The nominees were an-

nounced Monday. They include Rae Carson's "Girl of Fire and Thorns," Jenny Hubbard's "Paper Covers Rock," Guadalupe Garcia McCall's "Under the Mesquite," Ruta Sepetys' (ROO'-tuh seh-PEH'-tees)

"Between Shades of Gray" and John Corey Whaley's "Where Things Come Back."

The winner will be announced Jan. 23 at the library association's midwinter meeting in Dallas. There is no cash prize.

Stephanopoulos to replace Amanpour at 'This Week'

NEW YORK (AP)—George Stephanopoulos is returning to Sunday mornings at ABC News, replacing Christiane Amanpour as host of the political talk show "This Week."

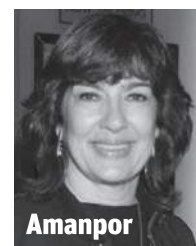
ABC said Tuesday that Stephanopoulos, who returns Jan. 8, will remain as host of "Good Morning America," although likely on a four-day schedule.

Amanpour, meanwhile, enters an unusual job-sharing role where she will become ABC's global affairs anchor, contributing to prime-time shows on world news, while also being host of a daily show on CNN International.

"This role is groundbreaking, bold and very different,"

Amanpour said. "I am thrilled and honored."

Critics wondered from the start whether the Iranian-born Amanpour, a veteran foreign correspondent for CNN, was



a good fit for a panel show dominated by American politics. It hasn't budged from third place behind NBC's "Meet the Press" and a resurgent "Face the Nation" on CBS, with the ABC show down 1 percent in ratings from last year.

Amanpour's reporting con-

nections in the Middle East served ABC News particularly well during the Arab spring, and she scored an exclusive interview with then-Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in February.

But the dawning of an American election year seemed to serve her competitors, old Washington hands Bob Schieffer at CBS and David Gregory at NBC, better.

The Sunday morning show was much stronger in the ratings behind Stephanopoulos, who was host from 2002 to 2010. ABC moved him to New York and "Good Morning America," which has done well in the ratings by teaming him with Robin Roberts.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Verna Masga Reyes

FONDLY KNOWN AS "VERN"
March 5, 1974 – December 10, 2011

of Yona, Guam formerly of Kagman III, Saipan was called home by our heavenly Father at the age of 37.

In her new life, Verna will be met at the gates of heaven by her mother, †Francisca Masga Reyes, Grandparents: †Nicolas B. & †Ignacia A. Reyes; †Jose H. & †Maria A. Masga.

Verna's love and memories will always be cherished in the hearts of her:

Domestic Partner: John B. Lizama

Children: Francea R. Lizama; Derick R. Lizama; John R. Lizama; & Jonah R. Lizama

Father/Stepmother: Jose Agulto Reyes & Soledad (Darling) C. Duenas

Brothers/Sisters & Spouses: Dennis & Yvonne M. Reyes – Kyana, Jake, Joseph, Alexis & JDen; Nick & Mary S. Reyes – Amber, Chelses & Nico; **Doreen** & John Sablan – John, Ashley, Maegan, Josh & Colvin; **Jovene** & Patrick Ogo – Kishia, Keoni & Kianny; **Germaine** & Peter Crisostimo – Korey & Myah

Numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews & friends will also miss her.

Last respect for Verna will be held on Monday, December 19, 2011 where her remains will be escorted from Nuestra Señora dela Paz Memorial Chapel, Cabrera Center to Mt. Carmel Cathedral for public viewing from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Mass for a Christian burial will be offered at 11:00 a.m. Interment will follow at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where we will bid her farewell and a peaceful rest.

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New Year's Eve

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:35
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	9:35
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Monday thru Thursday		4:05	7:05	

Halle Berry, Robert De Niro, Ashton Kutcher
Comedy drama • Rated PG13

Synopsis

Director Garry Marshall follows up his surprise hit Valentine's Day with this all-star ensemble film featuring a cast that includes Robert De Niro, Michelle Pfeiffer, Hilary Swank, and Ashton Kutcher.



The Sitter

Friday		4:25	7:25	9:55
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:25	9:55
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:25	
Monday thru Thursday		4:25	7:25	

Jonah Hill, Sam Rockwell, Ari Graynor
Comedy • Rated R

Synopsis

A college dropout becomes a babysitter to make some quick cash, and takes his three young charges on an epic urban adventure in this comedy from director David Gordon Green (George Washington, Pineapple Express). Noah (Jonah Hill) isn't a babysitter, but he'll do just about anything for a little extra cash in his wallet.

★ ★ ★



Arthur Christmas

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:45
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	9:45
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Monday thru Thursday		4:10	7:10	

James McAvoy, Hugh Laurie
Comedy • Rated PG



Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn-Part 1

Friday		4:15	7:15	10:00
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	10:00
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:15	
Monday thru Thursday		4:15	7:15	

Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart
Fantasy • Rated PG 13



Happy Feet Two

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:30
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:30
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Monday thru Thursday		4:00	7:00	

Elijah Wood, Robin Williams
Children's/family • Rated PG



The Muppets

Friday		4:20		
Saturday	1:20	4:20		
Sunday	1:20	4:20		
Monday thru Thursday		4:20		

Jason Segel, Amy Adams
Children's/family, Comedy • Rated PG



Immortals

Friday		7:20	9:40
Saturday		7:20	9:40
Sunday		7:20	
Monday thru Thursday		7:20	

Henry Cavill, Mickey Rourke, Freida Pinto
Epic • Rated R



Jack and Jill

Friday		4:30	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:30	7:30	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:30	7:30	
Monday thru Thursday		4:30	7:30	

Adam Sandler, Katie Holmes
Comedy • Rated PG

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Neil Diamond discusses his best year yet

By SANDY COHEN
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

LOS ANGELES, California (AP)—Neil Diamond has been a hit maker for more than four decades, but the 70-year-old singer-songwriter says that when he is alone in his studio, he sometimes wonders who will hear his music.

The answer, of course, is almost everyone, as evidenced by a stellar year that saw the "Sweet Caroline" singer inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, become a Kennedy Center Honoree, earn his 13th Grammy nod and release a career-spanning collection of greatest hits.

"The Very Best of Neil Diamond," featuring 23 songs, was released last week, just after he returned from the Kennedy Center Honors in Washington, D.C., where he shook hands with President Barack Obama.

Diamond is planning a North American tour to support the album next year, and he also is planning to marry his love, Katie O'Neil.

Diamond said 2011 has

"definitely been one of the best years ever."

Still soaring from the Kennedy Center celebration, he talked with The Associated Press about his new bride and his banner year.

AP: What were the Kennedy Center Honors like? (The ceremony will air as a special Dec. 27 on CBS.)

Diamond: It was like a fairy tale, really, because the White House is really done up for Christmas and I got the chance to bring my kids with me and three of my older grandkids, who all had the chance to say hello to the President and Mrs. Obama, and they were of course thrilled. That was, to me, the best part of it: being able to share it with them. It was a grueling gauntlet of praise and adulation and I'm going to have to work extra hard on this upcoming tour to feel as though I deserve it.

AP: What inspired you to release a career-spanning collection?

Diamond: I don't think I've

ever had the original studio recordings of these songs all together on one disc. ... It's like a Fellini party for me. I know all the names and places. I have recollections about each of these songs, I was able to write them down and include them in

the little booklet that comes with the CD, and it was like old home week for me. ... It was all the warm things that you would expect when you make a connection to something from your past that's very pure and direct and unaltered. That's what this entire album is all about and I love it for that reason.

AP: Congratulations on your engagement. What can you share about it?

Diamond: It's great to be in love again. It's definitely a positive and inspirational place to be. I'm lucky enough to have a wonderful gal and I talked her into marrying me and I'll try to make it the right decision for her. I think she's just terrific. And of course life that's



Diamond

FILM REVIEW

Cruise is just Cruise, but 'Mission' rocks

By DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITER

Luckily for Tom Cruise, "Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol" is one of his finest action flicks, just what's needed to potentially restore some of this fallen star's box-office bankability.

For director Brad Bird, though, the fourth "Mission," rock solid as it is, ranks only as his second-best action movie, after the animated smash "The Incredibles."

Cruise may be the star here, but Bird's the story, a director who's only making his fourth movie and, remarkably, just his first live-action feature. This is the best of the "M:I" movies, far better than Brian De Palma's original, No. 2 by John Woo and even the franchise's previous high with No. 3 by J.J. Abrams, who stuck around as producer on this one.

Those three filmmakers had years and years of action stuff behind them with real, live actors. Yet along comes Bird to show that the enormous talent behind his Academy Award winners "The Incredibles" and "Ratatouille" and his acclaimed cartoon adventure "The Iron Giant" transfers mighty nicely from animation to the real world.

Granted, this is the real world, "M:I"-style, where Cruise's missions and stunts truly are impossible by the laws of physics and normal, plausible storytelling constraints. But Bird applies the anything-can-happen



AP

In this image released by Paramount Pictures, Tom Cruise reprises his role as Ethan Hunt in a scene from "Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol."

limitlessness of cartoons and just goes for it, creating some thrilling, dizzying, amazing action sequences.

If you have the slightest fear of heights, grip the arm rests tightly and press both feet flatly to the floor during Cruise's attempt to scale the world's tallest building; even safe in your seat, an unnerving feeling of vertigo is bound to result as you stare down from the 130th floor.

For all the complexity of the action and gimmicks, Bird and screenwriters Andre Nemec and Josh Appelbaum (executive producers on Abrams' "Alias") wisely tell a simple, good-guys-against-bad-guys story. They keep Cruise surrounded by a tight, capable supporting cast in Jeremy Renner, Paula Patton and Simon Pegg, who co-starred in "Mission: Impossible III."

What Cruise does on screen is pretty much the same-old. Ethan runs, Ethan leaps, Ethan bashes faces, Ethan violates

traffic laws, Ethan runs some more. Cruise has two main modes in his acting repertoire: flash that thousand-watt smile or play the stone-face, and he mostly does the latter here, so honestly, Ethan's not all that interesting when he's standing still and talking.

That work ethic of Cruise, though, shows in every one of the spectacular action moments. For the climb up Dubai's 2,700-foot (823-meter) Burj Khalifa skyscraper, the filmmakers claim they had planned to recreate part of the building's exterior and have Cruise scale it on a safe soundstage. But Cruise wanted to climb the real thing, so much of the sequence was filmed with him harnessed to the building more than 1,000 feet (300 meters) up.

Renner's a great addition to the cast, and if there are more missions down the road, hopefully he'll be back. He exudes class, intelligence, warmth and

led alone and in a solitary way is life that's only half lived. And I refuse to accept living only half a life. I want to share it with someone, and I've been blessed to find this beautiful person to share my life with, so I'm a happy guy. I'm walking around with a smile on my face 24-7.

AP: In the notes included with your latest album, you say you longed for and finally found "a personally satisfying life for myself beyond the music." What do you mean?

Diamond: Music can absorb your entire existence, and it has for me for many, many years, and of course people who you love and who are near and dear to you pay a price, and I've always felt some sort of guilt about that. ... But you do need time away, time to clear your mind, time to experience the basic things of life, the simple, wonderful fact of existence and coexistence with the world around you—not only people but with nature. I never really had that until just recently and it's been a further inspiration to me, as if I needed any further inspiration. It's another bonus.

humor to counter Cruise's often robotic Ethan.

Patton is almost too gorgeous to exist, let alone be some junior field agent instead of a supermodel. But she's a tough, wily presence, particularly in a showdown with an enemy assassin (the nearly as gorgeous Lea Seydoux).

And Pegg is Pegg, the comic relief who adds some decent chuckles.

"Ghost Protocol" ends with a talky epilogue that feels tacked-on and trite, though it offers a couple of cameos from "Mission" past.

Whatever the movie's shortcomings, director Bird more than compensates with a bullet train of action and an arsenal of cool gadgets. Maybe making cartoons has expanded his conception of what's possible in a live film.

Bird does it so well, you don't really care how impossible it all is.

Bosnian Serb war victim wants Jolie's film banned

BANJA LUKA, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP)—The head of a group for Serbs held prisoner during Bosnia's 1992-95 war says Angelina Jolie's movie "In the Land of Blood and Honey" should be banned in the Serb-run part of the country.

Branislav Djukic of the Bosnian Serb Association of Camp Prisoners told the Associated Press on Tuesday that although he has seen only the trailer, he can already say the movie "is showing lies" and portraying Serbs as the only ones who raped women during the war.

Jolie's movie will be released in the U.S. on Dec. 23 and is a heavy drama about a Serb soldier who finds his ex-lover, a Muslim Bosnian woman, among sex slaves in a camp.

The movie was praised by a selected audience of 11 non-Serb war victim groups who saw it in Sarajevo earlier this month.



^{AP}
Brad Pitt, left, and Angelina Jolie, writer and director of the film "In the Land of Blood and Honey" pose at the premiere in Los Angeles, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011.

Hatch seeks show on his kids from sperm donations

NEWPORT, R.I. (AP)—Reality star Richard Hatch, who was freed this week from prison on a tax evasion sentence tied to his \$1 million "Survivor" winnings, said Tuesday that he is hoping for a new reality show about his relationship with the children conceived from his sperm donations.

Hatch, 50, was released Monday from prison for violating the terms of his supervised release in the long-running case. Hatch maintains his innocence and says he does not owe money to the Internal Revenue Service.

"Here I am, subjected to something that can only be described as institutionalized bullying," said Hatch, who spent nine months in prisons in five states.

Orson Welles' 'Citizen Kane' Oscar to be auctioned

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Academy Award Orson Welles won for writing the classic film "Citizen Kane" will be sold to the highest bidder.



Auctioneer Nate D. Sanders plans to sell the Oscar statuette on Dec. 20.

Welles also earned nominations for acting in and directing the 1941 film.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences declined to comment Tuesday on the planned auction. Since 1950, it has required Oscar winners to promise they will not sell their statuette before offering it back to the academy for \$1.

Welles died at age 70 in 1985.

Hatch won the inaugural season of the show in 2000. He was convicted in 2006 of two counts of attempted tax evasion and one count of signing a false tax return. He was released from prison in 2009 but ordered to return after a federal judge ruled he failed to file amended income tax returns for 2000 and 2001.

Shortly before returning to prison in March, Hatch, who lives in Rhode Island, said he met a 22-year-old biological son who is living in New Jersey. Hatch said he met the man, whom he identified only as Devin, through the Sibling

Donor Registry, which helps connect donors and children. They took a DNA test to confirm their genetic ties, he said.

Hatch said another biological child, whom he identified as a 22-year-old Maine woman named Emily, visited him in prison.

"It was additionally challenging to be wrongfully imprisoned knowing that these children were coming forward," Hatch said. "I told the court that beforehand. I explained this is a fascinating time in my life when I was at a place where I wanted to get to know these



Hatch

Oprah: Haitian president made me promise to return

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)—Oprah Winfrey's trip to Haiti included dinner with the country's president. Winfrey tells reporters she dined with President Michel Martelly and his wife Sophia. The president previously said he hoped the television personality would be a goodwill ambassador for Haiti. Winfrey says no formal role was discussed but he made her promise to return to Haiti and she did.

She spoke Tuesday as she visited Caribbean Craft, a well-known business that produces carnival masks, sculptures and paintings for export. The business received a loan through a program launched earlier this year by former U.S. President Bill Clinton, and has had success reaching high-end customers.

Winfrey says she will be featuring the venture in a program about Haiti on her Oprah Winfrey Network.

people who are my children who have come forward and want to get to know me."

He also views the show as a way to help the public understand the relationships between offspring and donors.

"The offspring want connections with their biological donors because of all kinds of varying reasons from health to emotional to whatever they are," said Hatch.

Hatch said a production company was involved in plans for a TV series about his encounters with his children but that no plans have been finalized. He declined to name the production company.

Hatch also has an adopted son, who attends the University of Rhode Island.

Child's way of saying goodbye defied adult funeral etiquette

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: "Saddened in New Jersey" (Oct. 2) complained that her sister's 4-year-old daughter put stickers on the hands and face of her deceased grandmother during her wake. Perhaps the child's mother didn't anticipate her daughter's actions. Children need to grieve, too. That said, they also should behave appropriately.

I saw an article about one funeral home with an excellent solution. Before the dearly departed is placed in the casket, the inside fabric, pillow, etc. are removed. The children are then allowed to decorate the uncovered casket walls with farewell messages and drawings. The interior is then "reupholstered" and nothing is visible. The children are told that it is to keep their messages private.

One story was particularly touching—a little boy wanted his mommy to know how much he loved her and for it to be as close to her as possible. He wrote "I love you, Mommy" on the casket pillow that was placed beneath her head. At the service, only he knew about the secret message he had left for his mom for all eternity.

A MOM IN TEXAS

DEAR MOM: Thank you for sharing a clever solution. I felt that the child's placing of stickers on her grandmother's body was disrespectful and the mother was wrong to permit it in spite of the grandfather's expression of disapproval. While I viewed it as a desecration of a corpse, readers felt differently. My newspaper readers comment:

DEAR ABBY: "Saddened" should never have removed the 4-year-old from the casket. It was not her place. The child was giving her grandmother a goodbye gift. If the woman wanted to remove the stickers before the casket was closed, she should have done it after the child left the room.

I have seen many friends and relatives place things in caskets as gifts and remembrances. It is not disrespectful to the deceased, but gives closure and a warm memory to those who are still living.

Putting stickers on Grandma was the child's way of saying goodbye. A funeral is a celebration of life and no matter what their age, people are entitled to say goodbye in their own way.

MELODY IN NEVADA

DEAR ABBY: If the sticker incident is the worst that can be said about the 4-year-old's behavior that day, what's the harm? Had she thrown a tantrum during the service or before placing the stickers, I'd agree that the child should not have been there. But since the behavior took place after "Saddened" made an issue of the stickers, the situation could have been handled more effectively.

All "Saddened" had to do was wait until the service was over, take the funeral director aside privately and ask him to remove the stickers before the deceased was interred. No drama, no scene, no tantrum, and everybody goes home in peace. Funerals, like any other event, are only as stressful as you want them to be.

NO DRAMA, PLEASE

DEAR ABBY: I own the West's oldest funeral firm and I disagree with your answer. Funerals are about learning that we are mortal. To stand on ceremony when a young child is participating in one of life's most important lessons misses the point. Memorials are not about formality but humanity. Let the child place those stickers and let everyone learn something from that.

DAN IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR ABBY: Our grandchildren love stickers, put them all over themselves and their clothing, and are thrilled if they can share them with me to "wear" for a while. If any of our grandkids are still young enough to want to "decorate" ME in my casket when I go, I would hope everyone around me would appreciate the gesture and smile at the loving relationship I had with that child.

GRANDMA OF (ALMOST) 13

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby - Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

R Kelly's Chicago-area house listed as short sale

OLYMPIA FIELDS, Ill. (AP)—The suburban Chicago mansion of Grammy-winning singer R. Kelly is on the market. A real estate listing shows the 22,000-square-foot mansion in Olympia Fields with a \$1.595 million price tag. It's a short sale, meaning Kelly owes more on the house than it's worth. Kelly custom-built the 16-room gated mansion in 1997. The house includes eight full bathrooms, four fireplaces, an indoor pool, sauna and theater room. There's also a private lake. Over the summer the house was the subject of a \$2.9 million foreclosure lawsuit because Kelly reportedly failed to make monthly mortgage payments for more than a year. Kelly's spokesman, Allan Mayer, says the singer hasn't lived in the home for more than a year.

NFL's Drew Brees to appear on Sesame Street

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Move over, Grover! One of the NFL's top passers is heading to "Sesame Street." New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees is making a special appearance on Thursday's episode of the educational children's TV show. He visited the set a few months ago to record the segment, which co-stars the street's furry red resident, Elmo. The segment will air

Thursday morning on PBS Kids. Brees, who has two young sons, Baylen and Bowen, taped the segment before the start of this year's regular football season. Brees leads the NFL with 4,368 passing yards, putting him on pace to break Dan Marino's single-season passing record of 5,084 yards, which has stood since 1984. Brees led the Saints to victory over the Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl XLIV and was that game's MVP.

CMA donates \$10M to Country Hall of Fame expansion

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The Country Music Association is giving \$10 million to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's \$75 million expansion campaign. The donation is the largest the Hall of Fame has received and will be used in part to help construct the 800-seat CMA Theater. The expansion will more than double the museum's footprint to 350,000 square feet when construction is complete in 2014. The hall of fame kicked off its campaign in July with nearly \$57 million pledged to help expand exhibit, performance, archival and educational spaces. The CMA previously contributed nearly \$5 million to the museum, and underwrites the hall of fame's induction ceremony. The hall of fame was established by the CMA in 1961.

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Rush for Christmas start leaves NBA in disarray

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP BASKETBALL WRITER



The lockout ended, and the NBA's woes were just beginning. Dwight Howard asked to be traded. Chris Paul was dealt to the Lakers, it seemed, until the league decided he wasn't. So the Lakers made another trade, which Kobe Bryant hated. "Nobody's happy," Spurs forward Tim Duncan said.

He was referring to feelings about terms of the new collective bargaining agreement, which in some ways are so similar to the old ones that it's fair to wonder exactly what was the point of the five-month lockout.

But he might as well have been talking about the superstars who want new homes, the critics blistering Commissioner David Stern for forcing one to stay put, or team officials charged with having clubs ready to play by Christmas under bizarre circumstances.

"It's just too bad, it really is. It's not reflective right now of the great product we had, you know?" former coach and ABC/ESPN analyst Jeff Van Gundy said. "It's one thing to have a summer and fall of strife due to labor negotiations. It's another to be seen as an organization that's in disarray once you settle that."

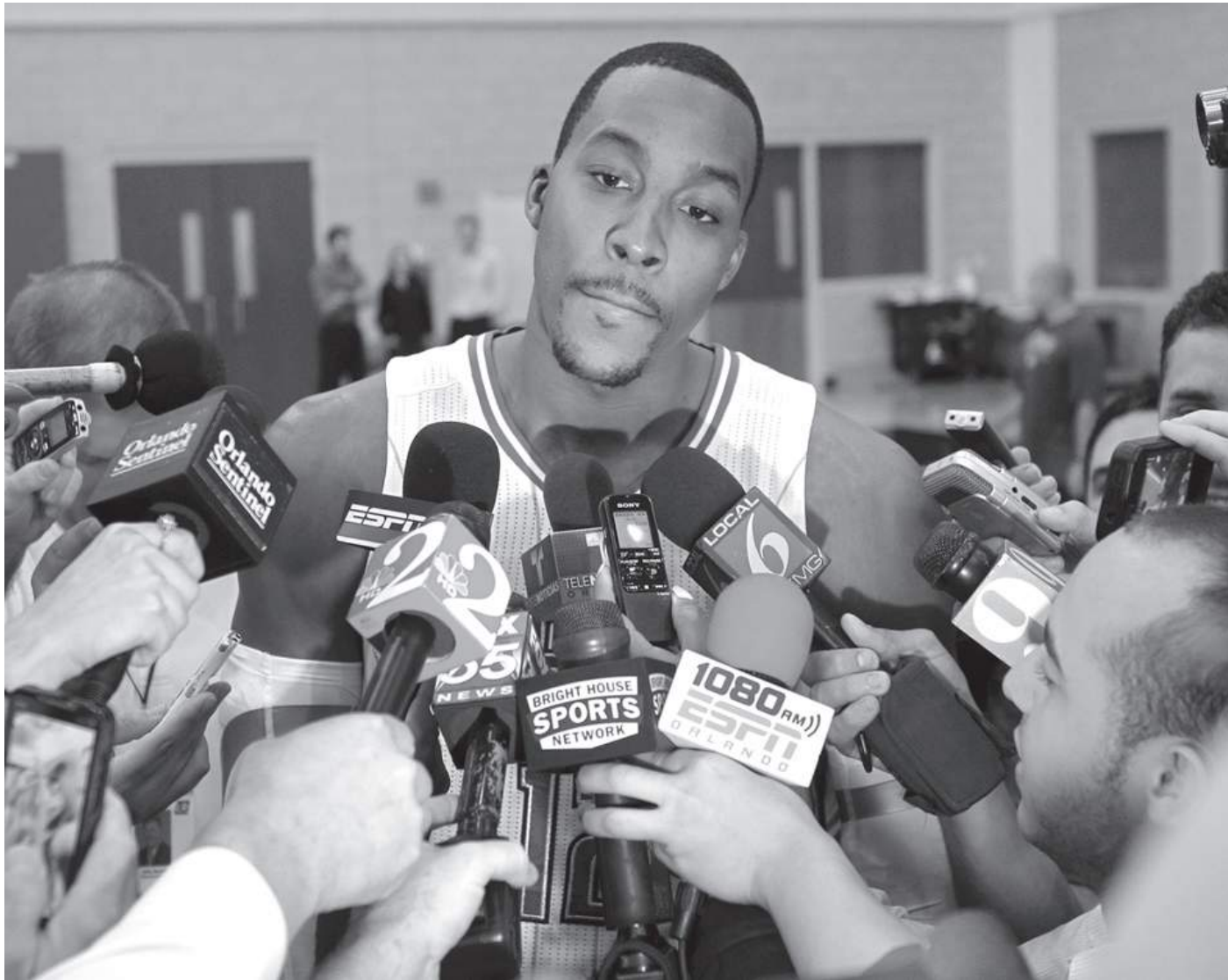
Van Gundy blames money, the natural place to start. Owners will save plenty by getting players to agree to a 12 percent reduction in salary costs in the new deal. But in doing so in time to salvage a substantial season, they conceded on many issues that were necessary to create the competitive balance they said they craved.

So Paul and Howard are trying to force their way from small markets to big, just as Carmelo Anthony did last year, and there's no guaranteed mechanism to stop them.

But at least everyone was home for Halloween.

"Just like the regular fan out there, just like you guys, you do wonder why stuff happened. You look at it and say, 'Why did the lockout happen?'" Miami guard Dwyane Wade said. "I don't see it helping right now. Maybe in a few years we'll all look back and see why this lockout happened. But right now it's not showing its face at all. ... The competitive balance thing was a pie-in-the-sky. We knew that was impossible, in a sense, especially when you've got players willing to take less money to be happy."

That's what Wade, LeBron James and Chris Bosh did so they could team up last summer. Owners could have attempted to block future superteam building with a hard salary cap or franchise tag designations that exist in the NFL, but the players fought those changes in an effort to keep a system that



Orlando Magic's Dwight Howard, center, answers questions from reporters during the team's NBA basketball media day, Monday, Dec. 12, 2011, in Orlando, Fla.

looked like the old one, giving teams the ability to exceed the cap by quite a bit if they were willing to pay a luxury tax.

The tentative deal on the main issues wasn't reached until Nov. 26, and Stern said the regular season would begin on Christmas if the deal was ratified in time. But it meant free agency opened the same day as training camps, forcing some teams to report with barely enough players for a starting five while their transactions awaited approval by the league office.

"It's an arbitrary date to have to start on Christmas. There's no magical starting time. Just push it back. Let them have a normal free-agent period of a week, 10 days, then have two to three weeks of training camp with a few exhibition games. Let them do what they should do and then start whenever that date is," Van Gundy said. "Skip steps, I don't see how that's helpful, other than it's helpful to the pocketbook. I think sometimes we sacrifice too many times the product for the pocketbook."

Van Gundy recalled something he once heard from Daryl Morey, the Rockets' general manager who thought he was getting Pau Gasol from the Lakers in the killed three-team trade.

"He said every organization needs a vice president of common sense, and right now that's exactly what the NBA needs. A vice president of common sense who looks at some of these decisions and says, 'You know what, we're better than this. We're all making a

ton of money anyway. If it's a little less than a ton, that's OK. But let's make sure when we come back, we got the right product,'" Van Gundy said. "I mean, the lockout didn't even help these teams. It wasn't anything about competitive balance."

Still, fans would have forgotten about it easier with a smoother start to the season. Instead, the news and fallout from the NBA office, as current owners of the Hornets, killing the Paul trade came the same night Stern announced the new CBA had been ratified. Then came word that Howard had asked the Orlando Magic to trade him, in part because the team hadn't acted on his personnel recommendations—though he said Monday he could be open to staying if the Magic made the right moves.

Was this really the best way for the NBA to come back?

"Yes and no," Magic coach Stan Van Gundy said. "I think, you know, it's certainly not the way (the Magic) wanted the NBA to come back. And I think the NBA, I can't speak for them, but I think they would want in some ways things to be a little bit more positive than they been. But at the same time, the Chris Paul and Dwight Howard situations have created a tremendous amount of interest, to the point where I don't even hear any mention of the lockout anymore—just those situations."

"The NBA has really gone to the top of the sports news in the last few days in the middle of an NFL season and everything

else. So the NBA is probably getting more attention right now than they normally would at this point in December. So I would say there's some positive to it for them also. There's not a lot of positive to it for us, but for to the NBA in general I think there's some positive to it for them."

The NFL settled its lockout early enough that its entire schedule remained intact minus one preseason game. The NBA is giving teams only 16 days and two exhibition games from the time business reopened until the season tips off—with a whole new set of rules to learn in between.

"The NBA is shooting from the hip. We didn't get rules on the collective bargaining—our ability to sign and trade players—we didn't get it until the day before we opened up camp, and we had a conference call at 8 a.m. the day of camp opening explaining the rules," Lakers general manager Mitch Kupchak said, before shaking his head.

"When you have a season that's delayed and starts on Dec. 1, and you have a week to do your business, and then training camp starts a week later, half the guys in the NBA still aren't signed, it's just a very unusual circumstance. It's unfortunate that the players have to go through it, but there's a lot of guys out there right now. Teams are in training camp. A lot of teams went into training camp with six-seven guys on their roster. That's never happened before. We just have to

get through it. Everybody has a job to do, and our coaches are on edge. All of a sudden on a Saturday morning, there's resolution and their season starts in 10 days. It's just something that we've never dealt with before."

Kupchak went on to trade Lamar Odom, to Bryant's disappointment, to the Mavericks after the Hornets deal fell through. But by the time Odom took the floor in Dallas, it left only 12 days before the defending champions are scheduled to host the Heat in a finals rematch.

Stern hasn't commented since a statement last Friday explaining his reasons for vetoing the trade, without influence from other owners. He'll be at the game in Dallas, as well as Oklahoma City's opener later that night.

Maybe by then things will feel back to normal.

They sure aren't now.

"This is about as bizarre to a start of a season that I've seen," new Rockets coach Kevin McHale said. "Forget just that short training camp and forget it's really hard on rookies that come in here. This trade has been done, then all the sudden it's not done and then it is done. Then guys aren't practicing that are completely healthy and want to practice and stuff. It's just crazy."

"I guess that goes to show why the league didn't want to do this," he added. "No one in the league, none of the players, nobody wanted to get to this point in the season. They wanted to get this all handled in September and I wish they had."

NBA BRIEFS

New Pacers West used lockout time to heal

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—David West is fine with the late start to the NBA season. Indiana's new forward is one of the few players who benefited from the lockout. Last season, he tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during a victory at Utah on March 24. The 31-year-old West had surgery April 12 and was told he'd need six to nine months to recover. Thanks to the extended break, he will be ready in time for the start of the season. "For a guy like me, it helped me," the two-time All-Star said. "It would have been a lot of time missed. I just attacked my rehab and knew this lockout was looming." West agreed to a two-year deal with the Pacers on Sunday that his agent, Lance Young, said was worth \$20 million. The two-time All-Star was drafted 18th overall by New Orleans in 2003 and he started 70 games for the Hornets last season.

Kwame Brown agrees to one-year deal with Warriors

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Free agent center Kwame Brown has agreed to terms on a one-year, \$7 million contract with the Golden State Warriors. Agent Mark Bartelstein says the offer in Golden State was "too good to pass up." The loss of Brown leaves the Bobcats with a hole at center. Gana Diop, who is coming off a torn Achilles tendon, is the only center on the Bobcats roster. Bartelstein says Brown is "extremely grateful" for the opportunity the Bobcats gave him, adding that "it was a huge step to come back and play for Michael."

Shelden Williams signs with the Nets

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP)—The New Jersey Nets on Tuesday signed free agent forward Shelden Williams. A five-year NBA veteran who has played for six teams, Williams has averaged 4.5 points and 4.6 rebounds in 303 games. Selected out of Duke by Atlanta with the fifth overall pick in the 2006 NBA draft, Williams was traded to Sacramento during the 2007-08 season. He also played in Minnesota, Boston and Denver before landing with the Knicks last season. "He is a proven veteran," general manager Billy King said, "who will add depth to our frontcourt rotation."

Sandusky waives hearing on sex abuse charges



BELLE-FONTE, Pa.(AP)— Former Penn State

assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky stunned a packed courtroom and backed out of a preliminary hearing at the last minute Tuesday, avoiding a face-to-face confrontation with accusers who his lawyer said were just trying to cash in by making up stories of child sex abuse.

Sandusky pleaded not guilty and vowed afterward to “stay the course, to fight for four quarters.”

His lawyer, Joe Amendola, then took the defense to the courthouse steps and spoke before dozens of news cameras for an hour, saying some of the 10 men who accuse Sandusky of molesting them as children were only out to profit from civil lawsuits against the coach and Penn State.

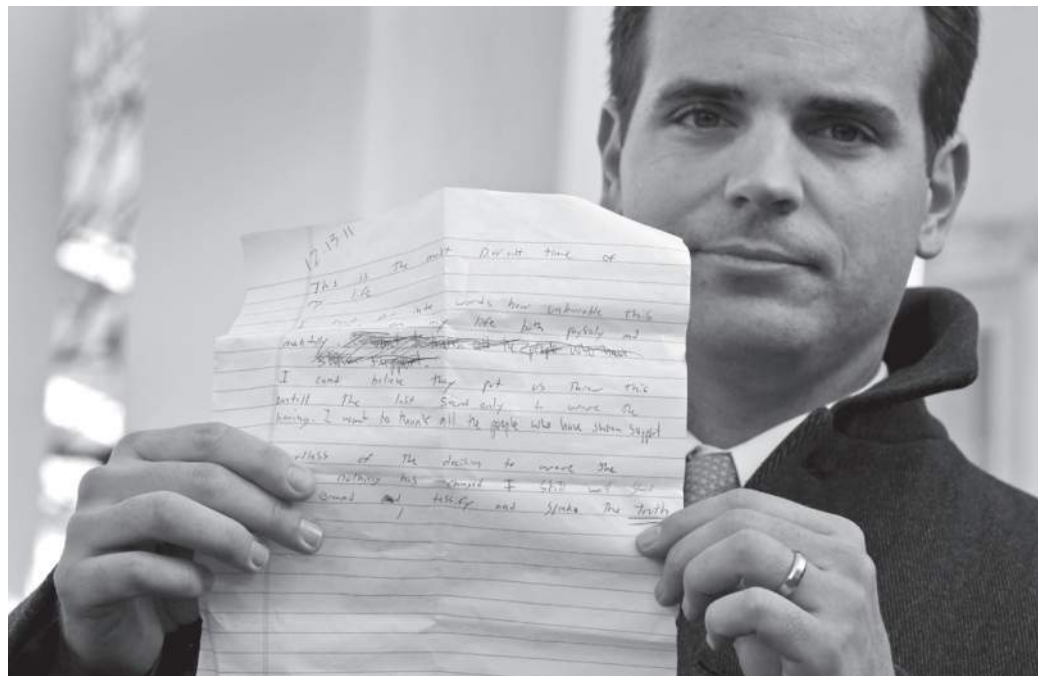
A prosecutor said about 11 witnesses, most of them alleged victims, were ready to testify at the hearing.

An attorney for one called Sandusky a “coward” for not hearing his accusers’ testimony and derided the arguments that they were out for money, saying many were too old to sue Sandusky under Pennsylvania’s statute of limitations.

“It makes my blood boil,” said Harrisburg lawyer Ben Andreozzi, who read a statement by his client, identified in a grand jury report as Victim 4, who was said to have become a fixture at one point in the Sandusky household.

“All the money in the world isn’t going to bring them back to where they were before the sexual assaults.”

Sandusky, 67, faces 52 criminal counts for what a grand jury



Ben Andreozzi, an attorney for victim number four, holds a handwritten letter from his client, which Andreozzi read, after a preliminary hearing for Jerry Sandusky was waived Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2011, at the Centre County Courthouse, in Bellefonte, Pa.

called a series of sexual assaults and abuse of 10 boys dating back to the 1990s, in hotel swimming pools, the basement of his home in State College and in the locker room showers at Penn State, where he coached football until his retirement in 1999.

The charges devastated the university and its storied football program and led to the departures of coach Joe Paterno and the university’s president and charges against two administrators accused of lying to a grand jury and failing to report the suspected abuse.

Amendola told reporters Tuesday that Sandusky is an emotional, physical man—a loving guy, an affectionate guy—who never did anything illegal. The lawyer likened Sandusky’s behavior to his own Italian family in which “everybody hugged and kissed each other.”

The lawyer accused the unidentified victims of seeking to cash in through false accusations and said the preliminary hearing would not have allowed him to delve into the witnesses’ credibility.

Amendola said he decided to waive the preliminary hearing late Monday after concluding that the evidence would be one-sided, and after prosecutors agreed to give early warning of any further charges and to keep Sandusky’s bail at \$250,000.

A spokesman for the prosecutors said Sandusky’s bail conditions were adequate, but made no other promises.

“Sandusky waived his rights today. We waived nothing,” said Nils Frederiksen, a spokesman for the state attorney general’s office.

Amendola and state prosecutors confirmed that no one had started plea bargain talks.

“There will be no plea negotiations,” Amendola said. “This is a fight to the death.”

Sandusky also waived a January arraignment and requested a jury trial, his lawyer said. A pretrial conference was set for March.

“If he wants to change his mind at the last minute, that’s his prerogative,” senior deputy attorney general E. Marc Costanzo said.

Veteran Pittsburgh defense attorney Patrick Thomassey said waiving the hearing was not surprising—because the prosecution’s burden of proof is much lower than at trial, and because the longer a witness waits to testify, the more cynical a jury might be.

“It’s like, ‘Why didn’t you tell anybody about that sooner?’” Thomassey said. “That’s why I want them to answer my hard question for the first time in front of a jury.”

Some lawyers for alleged victims said they were disappointed they didn’t testify, after steeling themselves to face him.

“It would have been apparent from watching those boys and their demeanor that they were telling the truth,” said Howard Janet, a lawyer for a boy whose mother contacted police in 1998 and said her son had showered with Sandusky.

Sandusky was accompanied to court by his wife, Dottie, some of their adopted children and alumni of The Second Mile, an organization that he founded in 1977 to help struggling children. The grand jury report said he used the charity to meet and lure his alleged victims.

The first known abuse allegation was in 1998, when the mother told police Sandusky had showered with her son.

Accusations surfaced again in 2002, when then-graduate assistant Mike McQueary reported another alleged incident of abuse to Paterno and other university officials.

The grand jury probe began only in 2009, after a teen complained that Sandusky, then a volunteer coach at his high school, had abused him.

The teen told the grand jury that Sandusky first groomed him with gifts and trips in 2006 and 2007, then sexually assaulted him more than 20 times in 2008 through early 2009.

Amendola on Tuesday attacked McQueary by citing a Sunday report in The Patriot-News of Harrisburg, Pa., that claimed he changed his story when speaking to a family friend.

The defense attorney said McQueary’s conflicting account would derail the prosecution.

“McQueary was always the

centerpiece of the prosecution’s case,” he said.

The newspaper report cited a source said to be familiar with the testimony of the family friend, Dr. Jonathan Dranov.

The Associated Press was unable to reach Dranov at his home and office for comment. No answered the door at McQueary’s home Tuesday. His father, John, declined comment to the AP.

Lawyers for Penn State Athletic Director Tim Curley and former vice president Gary Schultz issued a joint statement Tuesday about the newspaper report.

“If this information is true, and we believe it is, it would be powerful, exculpatory evidence and the charges against our clients should be dismissed,” said the lawyers, Thomas Farrell and Caroline Roberto.

Curley and Schultz face preliminary hearings on Friday in Harrisburg. They have denied the allegations against them. Curley was placed on leave and Schultz returned to retirement in the wake of their arrests.

Meanwhile, officials at another Pennsylvania school said Tuesday that Sandusky insinuated himself into the school’s football program last year, despite being denied an official position because he failed a background check.

Sandusky had sought a volunteer coaching position at Juniata College in May 2010, more than a year after a high school where he volunteered began investigating his contact with a student there.

Sandusky attended Juniata practices and games despite the athletic director’s directives to the then-head coach that Sandusky couldn’t associate with the team, school spokesman John Wall said.

2 men sue Syracuse, Boeheim for defamation



NEW YORK (AP)—Two men sued Syracuse men’s basketball coach Jim Boeheim and the school for defamation Tuesday, saying they were vilified as liars out for

money after they accused his longtime assistant of molesting them.

Former Syracuse ball boys and stepbrothers Bobby Davis and Mike Lang said they were molested by Bernie Fine, who has since been fired and has denied the allegations. A third man also has accused the 65-year-old Fine, who had been Boeheim’s top assistant since 1976.

“It really hurt me to learn coach Boeheim had accused me of lying,” Davis said, reading from a statement at a news conference after the lawsuit was filed in New York State Supreme Court.

When the allegations surfaced Nov. 17, Boeheim staunchly supported Fine, saying the accusations were lies to capitalize on the Penn State child sex abuse case.

“The Penn State thing came out, and the kid behind this is trying to get money,” Boeheim told the Syracuse Post-Standard. “If he gets this, he’s going to sue the university and Bernie. What do you think is going to happen at Penn State? You know how much money is going to be involved in civil suits? I’d say about \$50 million. That’s what this is about. Money.”

And in an interview with ESPN, which broke the story, Boeheim said: “It is a bunch of a thou-

sand lies that (Davis) has told. You don’t think it is a little funny that his cousin is coming forward?”

Lang said that when Boeheim suggested “my little brother and I were lying,” he “felt sick to my stomach.”

University spokesman Kevin Quinn declined comment. The U.S. attorney’s office is investigating.

Victim advocates reacted angrily to Boeheim’s initial comments and called for him to resign or be fired. He later said he was wrong to question the motives of the accusers.

That’s not enough, said attorney Gloria Allred, who is representing the stepbrothers, and whose recent clients include a woman who accused presidential candidate Herman Cain of making unwelcome sexual advances.

“Boeheim’s statements impugning the veracity and motivations of Mr. Davis and Mr. Lang were particularly disturbing given his 35 years of opportunity to observe Fine at close quarters, and at least seven years of opportunity to see Fine with Bobby Davis on trips, at practices, in Manley Field House and at games,” Allred said.

Boeheim softened his stance in the weeks since the accusations became public.

“Although Boeheim eventually acknowledged that he ‘misspoke,’ those words came too little too late,” Allred said. “One of Syracuse’s most respected individuals had already told the world repeatedly that Bobby Davis and Mike Lang were nothing but

liars and out for money and nothing else.

“Boeheim has not suffered any consequences in his employment for using his position of power within the university to make these false, inflammatory and injurious statements about Bobby and Mike.”

On Nov. 27, Zach Tomaselli, of Lewiston, Maine, also accused Fine, and ESPN aired a tape in which a woman it identified as Fine’s wife tells Davis she knew “everything” that was going on. After Fine was fired that night, Boeheim released a statement saying he regretted any statements he made that “might have been insensitive to victims of abuse.”

On Nov. 29, Boeheim apologized, but said again he didn’t regret defending his old friend based on the information he had at the time, adding that he never worried about his job status in 36 years.

By Dec. 2, he was far more contrite.

“I believe I misspoke very badly in my response to the allegations that have been made,” said Boeheim, who spoke slowly and paused frequently during a postgame news conference. “I shouldn’t have questioned what the accusers expressed or their motives. I am really sorry that I did that, and I regret any harm that I caused.”

Davis, now 39, said in the lawsuit that Fine started molesting him when he was about 11 years old and that the sexual contact continued for almost two decades. A ball boy for six years, Davis said the abuse occurred at Fine’s home, at Syra-

cuse basketball facilities and on team road trips, including the 1987 Final Four.

Lang, 45, has told ESPN that Fine began molesting him while he was in fifth or sixth grade.

The suit said Boeheim’s office was always near Fine’s—and next door at times—and that Fine’s door was generally open, except when Davis was inside with the assistant coach. The lawsuit contradicts Boeheim’s assertion to the Post-Standard that Davis went on road trips only if he was babysitting Fine’s kids; the suit said he traveled with the team before Fine had children and at times when the assistant didn’t bring along his family.

The suit includes Davis’ assertion that Boeheim saw Davis lying on the bed in Fine’s hotel room in his shorts during the 1987 Final Four. In a Nov. 17 telephone interview with The Associated Press, Boeheim denied ever going to the assistant’s room, much less seeing Davis there.

“This kid came forward, and there was no one to corroborate his story. Not one. Not one,” Boeheim told the AP. “... They said I walked into Bernie’s room on the road and saw this. I have never walked into Bernie’s room on the road. This isn’t true. This just isn’t true.”

The suit said Boeheim “made each of these statements knowing they were false or recklessly disregarding their truth or falsity.”

The suit requests special, compensatory and punitive damages in an amount to be determined at trial. Allred said the university was included because she believed it was legally liable for Boeheim’s statements as an employee who often spoke to the media on Syracuse’s behalf.

Jungle Bell Mountain Bike, Road Race this Sunday

In celebration of its 10th year anniversary, *Beach Road Magazine* will launch its first Jungle Bell Mountain Bike and Road Race scheduled to kick off this Sunday, Dec. 18.

Beach Road Magazine will be working hand in hand with the Northern Mariana Islands Cycling Federation which aims to enhance the sport of cycling in the CNMI and promote island-wide and international cycling events.

Interested participants can

register in advance at the Transpac Business center in Gualo Rai and also at 5:30am on the day of the competition. The race starts at 6:30am. Registration is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children aged 11 and under.

The competition includes a children's race, a mountain bike short and long course, and a road course. Young children must circle the Paupau Beach parking lot once while the older children must circle it twice; participating children are asked

to decorate their bikes in the Christmas spirit.

The children's race will be held after the MTB and Road Races. The MTB short course competitors will start off at Paupau Beach, head left out of the parking lot to the Marianas Country Club Road, bear right onto Binadu Drive, turn left at "T", head behind the golf course to Marpi Parkway, turn right and head down the Kimikaze trail, then take a left to the Grotto Road, another left down

the Santa Claus trail, and head straight back to Paupau Beach via the landfill road. The long course will include the Autobahn trail, Santa Claus Lane, the Banzai Trail, and head back down to Paupau Beach.

Beach Road Magazine's Susan Marchitti says, "I'm very excited at the opportunity of partnering up with the NMICF. I recognize the value of what they're doing. I'm glad that we have an event that we can share with them to promote this excit-

ing and growing sport and to help us put on a professional bike race."

Marchitti hopes to have at least 100 participants in this coming event. All participants must wear helmets.

Beach Road Magazine would like to thank the following for their donations to this event: NTT Docomo Pacific, Subway, Brabu Pharmacy, The Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, PHI Pharmacy, Hollywood Theaters, Megabyte, Hyatt Regency

Saipan, Coca-Cola, Pacific Islands Club, Saipan Grand Hotel, Marianas Visitors Authority, Triple J Wholesale, Gold's Gym, Taro Sue, Tropical Blend Spa, Shell, Delta Management Co., 360 Restaurant, Scoops, National Office Supply, Herman's Modern Bakery, Saipan Sea Ventures, MARPAC, R & M Printers, and Lollipop.

For more information or questions about the event, call Marchitti at 235-7645 or 483-3145. (PR)

Vitali Klitschko to fight Dereck Chisora in Munich



B E R L I N (AP)—Vitali Klitschko will defend his WBC heavy-weight title against Britain's Dereck Chisora before turning his attention to a possible last bout against David Haye.

Klitschko's management group announced Monday that the 40-year-old Ukrainian will fight Chisora in Munich's Olympic Hall on Feb. 18, with German daily Bild reporting that Klitschko would then fight Haye in Germany in July.

"Haye will really get it, he will lose through knockout," Klitschko told Bild, adding that he wants to fight at least two bouts in 2012, before letting fans make a decision on his retirement.

"I don't want to break the age record of George Foreman, who



Klitschko



Chisora

boxed until he was 45," he said.

The 31-year-old Haye announced his retirement in October, but may be tempted to reverse the decision after indicating he would like a shot at the older Klitschko brother.

For now, Klitschko is focusing his attention on Chisora, who lost to Finland's Robert Helenius in a split decision for the vacant European title on Dec. 3.

Chisora's controversial loss in Helsinki was the 27-year-old's second and he immediately demanded a rematch.

"It's not only in his last fight—which he lost unfairly—that Chisora showed he's up to bigger opponents," Klitschko said.

Chisora's record of 15 wins from 17 fights—including nine knockouts—pales in comparison to Klitschko's 40 knockouts from 43 wins and two losses, but the Ukrainian is not taking the Londoner lightly.

"I'm warned by his excel-

lent performance against Helenius and will, as always, prepare myself intensely and meticulously," he said.

Klitschko produced a dominant performance to stop Polish challenger Tomasz Adamek in the 10th round of his last bout in September.

Chisora, a former Commonwealth and British champion, was due to fight Klitschko's younger brother Wladimir in December 2010, only for the bout to be called off when the Ukrainian sustained an abdominal injury.

Wladimir Klitschko, the WBO, IBF and WBA champion after beating Haye in Hamburg last July, was due to fight France's Jean-Marc Morneau in Duesseldorf last Saturday, but that was called off after he needed two operations in two days to remove a kidney stone.

That fight has been rescheduled for March 3 in Duesseldorf.

RYUTO

From Page

2011. Kang's lone record in the Tsunami Swim Circuit Series 4 came in the 200m individual medley where he submitted 2:58.63, more than six seconds faster than his previous mark of 3:04.92 (April 15, 2011).

Yanai and Kang's performance in last Saturday's competition was a fitting way to end the series, as the two Tsunami Saipan swimmers were also the first ones to either post or reset CNMI age group record.

In Series 1, Kang logged

1:23.74 in the 100m backstroke event in the boys U8 division to break the 1:26.54 he made on Feb. 5, 2011. Yanai raced in the boys U8 100m freestyle and crushed his own record when he clocked in at 1:16.11, eclipsing the 1:17.64 he tallied early this year. Kang and Yanai also joined the 50m freestyle race and their times of 34.33 seconds and 33.85 seconds, respectively, both surpassed the previous mark of 36.18 seconds (Ryuto Yanai/April 16, 2011).

In Series 2, Kang reset two more marks. Eight-year-old Kang finished the 100m butterfly event in 1:22.63 to pass his pre-

vious record of 1:28.95 (Feb. 4, 2011). In the 50m breaststroke, the Garapan Elementary School student clocked in at 45.75 seconds, which is better than the 46.53 seconds Ryuto Yanai recorded on May 27, 2011.

In the penultimate series, Kang still broke records. He smashed three marks with the first one in

PASCUAL

From Page

Nazareno "Jun" Ortiz, who already won earlier in the year.

Ortiz marked a 41 at the turn and finished the back with a 42 for a raw score of 83, which calculated into a field-low 68. He came away with eight pars with no double bogeys.

Former aces Raffy Piamonte (B-October), Adoni Matutino (A-January), Dennis Sebastian

the 400m freestyle event, as he timed in at 5:34.00 to erase the 6:09.43 Kensuke Kimura logged on Feb. 25, 2005. The other two marks came from the 100m breaststroke where he clocked in at 1:38.22, more than two seconds faster than his previous mark (1:40.77/April 16, 2011) and the 50m backstroke where he timed

(A-August), and Rick Kautz (A-May) finished in fifth, sixth, seventh, and ninth place, respectively.

Meanwhile, Randy Tudela, Joseph Fernandez, and Hiroyuki Toyoshima finished third, fourth, and eighth place, but had not competed in enough events to be eligible for the finale.

Other former A-division aces include, February's Freddie Cataluna, March's Leo Ganacias, April's Wil-

liam Retardo, July's Jacinto Ramones, September's Alstree Chiong, October's Manny Alvarez, and November's Ruben Avendano.

Former B Division aces include January's Richard Meimban, February's Richard Atalig, March's John Matsumoto, April's Ortiz, May's Ted Malaran, June's James Mitchell, July's Dan Ganacias, August's Sandy Palon, and September's Ernie Lopez.

There is no difference be-

Saipan Swim Club's Taka and Ichiro Borja, Naoki Kasai, David Boyer, Geuel Villacrusis, and Taiga Sato, and Tsunami Saipan's Kang, Ryuto Yanai, Miku Tammy, Kyona Rivera, Karen Iri-naka, Hiroto Yanai, Quina Flores, Angel Tan, Angel De Jesus, Kaito Yanai, Takumi Sugie, and Daime Rivera.

tween being an A or B division ace as, by rule, organizers simply divide the golfers into two groups if there are more than 20 participants in an event.

The two-day, season-ending tournament is slated for January. The official locations and tee times are still being confirmed but one thing is for sure, \$300 cash and bragging rights on the year will go to the winner.

For more information, visit FilTaga's website at www.filtaga.com.

CNMI

From Page

White said.

The CNMI can send as many athletes to Kazan, but only four could get financial aids and the rest will have to shoulder the cost. NMSA will have to sit down to the concerned local sports association and discuss money matters if the latter decides to send their athletes to the World University Games.

Wong, a student of University of Hawaii-Manoa, joined the swimming competition in Shenzhen, while University of Guam's Mancao competed in the bike race this year.

Meanwhile, the FISU Inspection Team had completed its

visit to the venues for the 2013 University Games last week. The group led by FISU Director for the Summer Universiade Marc Vandenplas inspected the newly built Universiade Village, Rowing Centre, Saint Petersburg Volleyball Centre, Ak Bars Wrestling Palace, Vatan and Olimp Multifunctional Sports Complexes, Akcharlak and Burevestnik Swimming Pools, Field Hockey Centre, and Shooting Complex and the under construction under International Media Centre, Aquatics Palace, and the 45,000-seat football stadium.

The team will again go to Kazan next month to hold an educational workshop individuals and groups involved in preparation and staging of the biennial event.

RBC

From Page

Family Fun-Athon to help them whip back into shape," said RBC head coach Joe Diaz in a phone interview yesterday.

After the family event the RBC plans on sending some teams over to Tinian for a camping trip and friendship tournament with Tinian players in February 2012.

"We want to visit Tinian to build friendships with our island

neighbors, and at the same time, we want our (RBC) members to learn life skills in addition to promoting basketball and a healthy lifestyle. Camping and spending time with the Tinian kids is a great way to build character and it gives us the opportunity to both learn and take part in a lot more activities than just basketball," said Diaz.

Lastly, the RBC is still waiting to hear from IT&E to see if they will return as the sponsor for its 2nd Annual Youth Christmas Tournament, which

organizers are pushing to hold from Dec. 28 to 30, also at the Garapan Basketball Court. This event is a 5-on-5 full court competition.

In related news, the RBC has announced plans of fielding its U14 squad in the 2012 Manila-Pacific Rim Goodwill Games, which will be held in the Philippines from July 23 to July 30.

The GCDC and RBC are currently collaborating with longtime sponsors Division of Youth Services and Vice Speaker Felicidad Ogumorro (Cov-

Saipan) to help enable most of its events, but are always open to any new forms of sponsorship assistance.

Any small businesses that wish to donate small gifts that the group can use as prizes for participants in their sports activities would be a great help. Based on past experience, the kids seem to enjoy simply prizes such as food and water park and movie coupons.

Visit RBC's Facebook page or call the GDCD at 233-8978 for more information.

Shirley's Invitational Basketball League Awardees

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Players of PSS/McGraw-Hill receive the runner-up trophy.



Players of DFS Galleria pose for a group photo after beating PSS/McGraw-Hill in the 3rd Annual Shirley's Coffee Shop Invitational Basketball League last Sunday night at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium.



Fiesta's Elmer Esdreton, left, and Mobil's Marvin Rabauliman, right, receive their third place trophies from league coordinator Boy Lingcasso, center.



Gabriel White with his Best Coach trophy.



From left, DFS' Jack Lizama, Fiesta's Elmer Esdreton, PSS' Dave Sablan, and Shirley's Kae Bernardo, are named members of the Mythical Team along with Mobil's Jun Estolas (not in the photo).



Regular season MVP and scoring champion Dave Sablan of PSS/McGraw-Hill.



Shirley's Kae Bernardo smiles after receiving the Best in Rebounds award.



Finals MVP Pete Iguel of DFS Galleria.



Shirley's J.R. Barrios with his Best in Free Throws award.



Wushin Express' Ferdie Tobias with his Best in Assists award.



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

28 THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2011

Ryuto, Lukas reset CNMI marks again



Kang



Yanai

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tsunami Saipan's Lukas Kang and Ryuto Yanai capped the last leg of the Tsunami Swim Circuit Series with record-breaking swims at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi last Saturday.

Yanai re-set two more CNMI age group marks in the boys U8 division, while Kang made one. Yanai raced in the 50m freestyle and timed in at 33.65 seconds to surpass the CNMI age group mark (33.85) he set on Nov. 12,

Tsunami
SAIPAN

2011. Then in the 200m freestyle, the 8-year-old Yanai clocked in at 2:45.35, chopping off more than five seconds from his previous age group record (4:50.52) logged on Feb. 4,
See RYUTO on Page 26

4 CNMI athletes in 2013 University Games

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association president Michael White announced that four CNMI athletes could get a free entry to the 2013 World University Summer Games in Kazan, Russia.

Whitesaid during the NMSA meeting last week at the conference room of the Gilbert C. Ada

Gymnasium that besides the two slots (free airfare and accommodations for two athletes) FISU (Federation Internationale du Sport Universitaire or International University Sports Federation) is giving to the CNMI, the Oceania University Sports Association can shoulder the trip of two more athletes from the Commonwealth to Kazan. The CNMI is a member



White

of both FISU and OUSA thus could receive financial assistance for athletes competing in the FISU-sanctioned events.

The NMSA president, who attended an OUSA meeting in Brisbane, Australia last month, added that the CNMI could expect around \$5,000 financial assistance for the Kazan trip.

The 2013 University Games

will from July 6 to 17 and is for athletes in the 18 to 27 age group and are enrolled in a college or university.

"At this early, we would like to ask our local sports federation to get ready for the University Games and identify athletes eligible to compete. Rezne Wong and Matthew Mancao had a great experience in Shenzhen, China last August and I hope more CNMI athletes will have an opportunity to compete and participate in this great event,"

See CNMI on Page 26

Pascual, Po top December tourney



Fil-Taga December B Division champion Manny Po, right, poses with cash prizewinner Nazareno "Jun" Ortiz during the group's awards ceremony held at a member's residence in San Vicente.

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



Larry Pascual and Manny Po topped the A and B divisions, respectively of the Filtaga Golfers Association's December Ace held over the weekend at the Marianas Country Club in Marpi.

Pascual scratched a 44 on the front nine and finished with a 45 on the back for a gross total of 89. His 14-handicap left him with a net card of 75 to top the club's A division. In all, he managed six pars in the round that went with four double bogeys.

Pascual actually finished in 10th place out of a total field of 27, but the higher ranked players were either ineligible for the FilTaga Golfer of the Year event or have already qualified for the event for being past aces.

Po, for his part, managed a 43 on the first nine holes and pulled into the clubhouse with a 45 on the back for an 88 gross tally. His 19-handicap factored into his 69 net score that was good enough to lead the B division. Po managed five pars with four double bogeys in his round.

Po actually finished second place overall in the division behind \$150 cash prizewinner

See PASCUAL on Page 26

RBC Christmas 3-on-3 caging this weekend

»5-on-5 tourney, Family Fun-Athon also in pipeline

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



The Garapan Community Development Center and Rollers Basketball Club are hosting the 2011 Christmas 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament this Friday and Saturday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

The event is free and is open to all U10, U12, and U14 players. There is a maximum of five players per roster and the event will utilize FIBA 33 rules.

Friday's games will start at 5pm with the championship pairing tipping off around 3pm on Saturday.

Medals will be awarded to



Rollers Basketball Club members pose for a group photo at Guam's Micronesia Mall in late November when they were competing in the 2011 Take Care Thanksgiving Hoop Fest.

the championship teams during the RBC's 2nd Annual Family Fun-Athon, which will be held on Jan. 28, 2012.

Family Fun-Athon will also

feature a 3-on-3 tournament between U12, U14, and U16 players; however, the parents will be thrown in the mix.

There are also various side

games planned for the kids such as a spoon toss race, minefield, a paint-balloon war, sneaker scramble, grab bag race, a game of "mom-or-dad calling" and even some volleyball.

"The Family Fun-Athon is open to everyone, but one big purpose for the event is because we at the GCDC want people, especially in the Garapan precinct, to know that we are here and our services are readily available for them," said GCDC and RBC front man Joe Diaz.

Organizers hope the Fun-Athon would help people lose some weight they may have put on during the holiday season.

"We assume that a lot of people may have packed on a few extra pounds during the holiday break and we want to use the

See RBC on Page 26